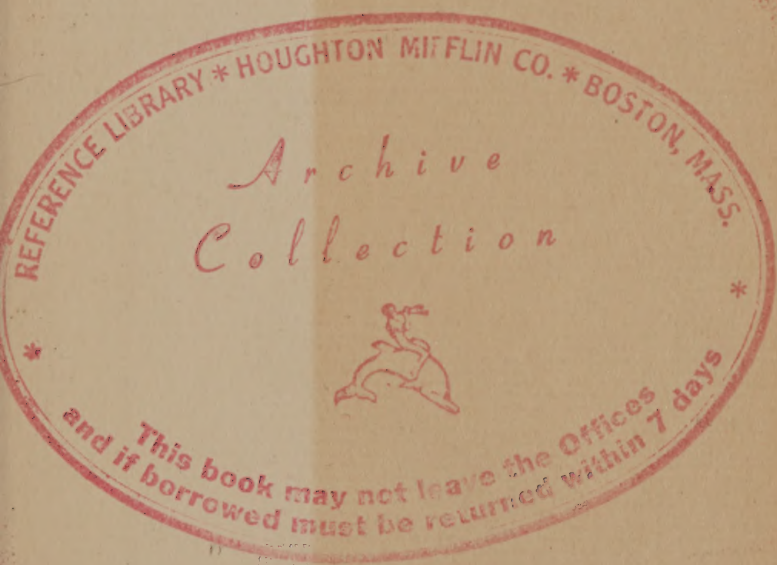






Ruth Hall

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HE WHISPERED A BLESSING (Page 8)

THE GOLDEN ARROW

A Story of Roger Williams's Day

BY

RUTH HALL

Author of "*In the Brave Days of Old*,"
"*The Boys of Scrooby*," etc.



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To
LAURENCE, ARTHUR, AND HERBERT
I DEDICATE THIS BOOK

PREFACE

IN the following story incidents have been added to the youth of General Goffe and to the old age of Lady Moody. I have given name, form, and one new adventure — that in the Connecticut woods — to the Hutchinson family. To a fictitious person was awarded the honor of obtaining, on fictitious grounds, Mary Dyer's reprieve and of rescuing the girl — she is nameless in our records — who was carried off by the Indians. These form the only deviations from fact consciously woven into the pages of *The Golden Arrow*.

“Geography and chronology are the eyes of history,” but they are not the breath of its life. The vitality of a fact lies in its human interest. It has long been my belief that, to supplement the conning of dates and tables of names, by setting forth the dramatic incidents of the same period, was the

one way to realize that time to the imagination and the memory of the student.

I am grateful to those critics who have recognized and encouraged my purpose. To them, and to the boys of America I offer a third book upon these lines,—a tale of that hero Roger Williams and of his heroic day.

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THE GOLDEN ARROW

CHAPTER I

WINTHROP'S WARNING

“WHO goes there?”

Nan Hutchinson clutched nervously at her companion's sleeve. She shivered, and not from cold, although the winter night was falling.

“It is the watch,” she breathed into Dick Markham's ear.

“Hush ; I know.”

The boy's fingers closed upon her wrist. He pulled her towards him, in his vigorous grasp, and along a bypath leading from the water. “This way,” he murmured. “Come out of sight.”

With softest step they ran over the icy ground, dodging behind tree-trunks indistinctly seen in that dull light, avoiding as best they could the underbrush, the logs and stumps which still remained in this lane of

Boston town. Dick did not relax his hold that guided the girl, although she kept as good a pace as himself and was as dexterous in shunning the pitfalls in their way. At last they paused.

"I fear me because of that fellow," Nan whispered, one hand on one side, her breath coming in quick, agitated gasps. "He locked up Margery Fellows and George Peters a fortnight since, but for speaking together, on the street, after sunset, and they must even pass the night in those dismal cells at the guardhouse. What if he should encounter us again, Dick? Truly I am sore afraid."

Dick knew the story of George Peters and Margery Fellows quite as well as did his companion, while he had no more desire to be arrested for disregard of the ordinance against night walks. He assumed a brave air, however, for the girl's benefit.

"We need not return by the bay road," he answered, "and here we are safe from pursuit. Now, Nan, tell me what was in thy mind. Thou wert in distress, so the message ran, and wouldst speak with me in private. Concerning whom is the trouble — thy mother?"

"Nay, my mother maketh friends the rather," she answered proudly. "Her religious teachings daily gain more hearers. 'Tis of Master Williams I would tell thee, Diccon — thy father's friend at Salem."

Richard drew an impatient sigh. He was fond of the young clergyman, and he understood — as what child, two hundred years ago, did not? — the full story of Roger Williams's controversy with the Puritans. Yet he was, thus early, weary of a life spent in dispute. He spoke somewhat abruptly: —

"That matter hath been adjusted for the present. Master Williams is to bide at Salem during the winter, on his promise that, when milder weather comes, he shall depart thence, he and his family, in all peace."

"Not so," persisted the girl. "I have it from a source — well, I cannot tell thee whence. But a sure report hath reached me that he is to be banished and at once. Underhill himself will carry the word to him. There is no chance of any mistake, I am sure."

Dick guessed her informant — the daughter of one high in authority, a merciless enemy, moreover, of Roger Williams. Yet he could not bring himself to believe the tale. He stood still in the snowy road to argue.

"It is impossible," he protested. "Even their malice will not drive the unfortunate man, his wife, and young child, out in this stinging cold to the wilderness."

"Nay, that they will not," was Nan's quiet answer. "Rather, they send Underhill to fetch Master Williams hither. From this port they will dispatch their prisoner to England, to Archbishop Laud's tender mercies for heretics. Such is their plan."

Richard was convinced. "Underhill taketh his canoe?"

"So it is said. Oh, Dick, thou wilt forestall him? Thou wilt go first, and go faster than he, by land?"

The boy's expression was a study, but then no one could read it, in the dark. How easy it was, he thought, for women to arrange such an undertaking for others, since it never could be demanded of themselves. How simple the part of suggestion, how difficult that of fulfillment. Impetuous Nan Hutchinson was often provoked by his deliberation. As usual he spoke slowly: —

"I must tell all this to my father, and see what he would have me do."

"He will say, Go."

"Such is mine own belief. He cannot

move hand nor foot to aid Master Williams, but I am sure he will send his son. Howe'er that be, I must haste to him with these news."

"Yes, yes," Anne hurriedly agreed. "Make all haste, Diccon. Wait not on me. I can find my way homeward. Think on poor Mistress Williams and the little one. Hasten away."

"There is no such pressing need," he assured her, "that I should leave thee here to fall a prey, perchance, to the watch, perchance to a hungry wolf. After I have seen thee safely across thy father's threshold will be time enough for further plotting."

Perceiving that he was not to be moved, Nan did the next best thing to freeing him of her society at once. She so quickened her steps that, very speedily, Dick had left her at the little log house which stood at the corner of what are now Tremont and School streets. Bidding her a hasty good-night, he took to his heels, eluded the watchman once more, and fled towards home.

When he lifted the latch of a still more primitive dwelling than that of the Hutchinson family, he entered a room that, to his surprise, he saw was occupied not only by his invalid father, on his rude couch near the

fire, but by a stately, handsome man whom there was no mistaking. He was sitting close to the bed, bent above it in earnest conversation. Both men raised their heads, starting at the interruption, while they glanced apprehensively towards the opening door: —

“They are devising some scheme,” thought Dick.

He advanced across the floor, no hint of this suspicion in his respectful greeting. John Winthrop looked uneasily at his host, who spoke: —

“Come hither, Diccon. I have a secret to share with thee. Come close to me, boy, and — hark! Master Williams is under arrest. The sentence goeth at daybreak.”

“Yes, father.”

“There is but one course to follow.” Edgar Markham’s eyes searched the brooding face of his son. John Winthrop’s gaze was fixed upon the sick man. “Dick, dost thou guess what it is?”

“I think so, father. He must be warned.”

Winthrop turned suddenly upon him. The firelight leaped up, disclosing the harassment that clouded his features: “And thou shalt be our messenger, my lad. There is none other.”

Father and son each drew a deep breath, like a groan, that sounded softly through the silence. Winthrop went on vehemently: "Thou art o'er-young, it may be, for this forced march. Yet thou art hale and strong. Thy very youth counteth for as much with as against thee. Then thou art acquainted with the country. Thou art brave and trustworthy," here Edgar Markham reached out to take his boy's hand in his. "Thou art a faithful friend to Roger Williams, and obedient, I know, to thy father's lightest wish. This," he waved his arm towards the couch, "is Master Markham's earnest desire. What he cannot do of himself he would ask of thee."

"Would ask only," the invalid declared. "I do not command thee, dear heart. I realize what this means. Art thou minded to go?"

There are two sorts of courage: one which is a thoughtless impulse, or desperation, — Plato speaks of a valor born of fear, — and another that comes from a full comprehension of all dangers. The latter is the only bravery sufficiently strong to face the hardships of a hard world. The Markhams, son and sire, possessed that spirit. Both were

thoughtful now. Both recalled every phase of the journey spread out before the lad, the weary miles through the snow and ice of an unbroken land, among the haunts of wild beasts and of hostile Indians, a journey against time, to be undertaken by a mere boy, and alone.

It was the boy who first spoke. "There is another reason, sir," he said, addressing Winthrop, "why I be chosen as this messenger. I shall not be missed from the town. My goings and comings may be secret, as those of an important citizen could not."

"That is true. Then you go?"

"Yes."

Winthrop drew a letter from his pocket.

"This will give Master Williams all information and advice," he said, pressing it into the boy's hands. "Now," he rose to his feet, "I shall leave thee about thy preparations. Understand: thou shouldst be away at once."

"I will not delay."

Dick escorted their visitor to the door. Returning, he knelt by his father's couch. There was another moment's silence, between the two and their God.

The sick man placed his hands on the lad's yellow hair while he whispered a blessing.

Seeing Richard about to speak he motioned him to listen : —

“I knew what would be thy decision,” his faint, worn voice began. “Thou hast taken on thyself many a heavy burden in the word that thou hast pledged. Ere we part, perchance,” — he paused abruptly. No, he could not add to the fears of what was before his son the sorest fear of all : that he might not be still on earth to welcome Richard’s return. He changed his sentence to — “It would please me, Diccon, didst thou say over, yet again, the terms of our agreement. They mean so much to me.”

The backlog broke with a crash. A leaping flame shone upon the kneeling figure, with hands clasped and face raised, repeating reverently these words :

“I promise, if he — the man in England — and I are both alive, to deliver your letter, to give your message. I have sworn on the Holy Evangelist of Almighty God that, should the chance offer, I will serve him to the last drop of blood in my body. Meanwhile, I will never neglect the cause of the right, nor the weak. I will not make an enemy without solemn cause. Yet will I not seek first popularity, nor success. I take my oath that I

will endeavor, always, in every way, to help the helpless. So may God help me."

It was evidently a familiar ceremony. Upon its conclusion Dick sprang up and set about his arrangements for departure. He asked some anxious questions as to the invalid's well-being during his absence, and was reassured by a confident reply. He kissed his father's hand. With a last affectionate sentence and look he stole to the door. He opened it gently and stepped outside.

The piercing cold of a January night swept against his cheek. He pulled his cap farther over his ears, thrust both hands into his pockets, and plunged forward through the drifts, for a storm had gathered since that evening walk. Dick struck out directly towards the south.

His first thought was to avoid the watch, the second to leave Boston with all speed. These objects might be accomplished by the "short cut" he took to the woods. Within a quarter-hour the boy found himself among the great trees of the primeval forest.

He knew exactly what to do. His father and John Winthrop had not relied in vain upon Dick's intimate acquaintance with those woods. He was proceeding at his utmost

sustained speed towards an Indian settlement where he could ask for shelter, when his progress was suddenly arrested.

Some one stood in the path.

CHAPTER II

WHILE THE OFFICER SLEPT

DICK was completely taken aback. He had supposed himself to be free by now of the settlement. He had abandoned the idea of interruption, or capture, and he stood still in the snow, his breath coming quickly, his heart beating in irregular throbs.

“Who is it? Speak,” said a heavy voice.

With a sensation of relief the boy recognized the tones. If he must be stopped, it were best that a stupid, good-natured fellow, like Hal Goodwin, the trapper, should intercept him, since it could not be difficult to elude so clumsy a man.

“Oh, Hal, is it you?” he cried in a counter question.

“Richard Markham! What dost thou here?”

Dick tapped him on the shoulder. Men accustomed themselves, in those troublous, exciting times, to quick resolves and reasonings. He was already evolving a manner of escape

from this undesired companion. How fortunate, he thought, that he was proceeding in the opposite direction from Salem. The only land route out of Boston must so lead until the peninsula was left behind, yet the look of it, to a dull observer, would be most unsuspecting.

"One trapper doth not tell another whither he is bound," Dick observed, with a careless laugh.

Hal nodded sagely : "That is true. I saw the coat of wolfskin you made for little Anne Hutchinson. Some of those last pelts were the finest I have ever handled. You are both clever and lucky, Dick. I grudge you neither cleverness nor luck. I shall not ask you to show me your snares, but we will walk together, for company, as far as Roxbury, my lad."

Dick bit his lip with impatience. At Roxbury he must turn northward. Nor did he wish to be seen at the village, whence tales might go to Boston. No incident was too trivial to travel from colony to colony.

"So be it," he outwardly agreed. "Let us hasten on, or the snow will block our path."

They trudged along, accordingly, in single file, for some moments which seemed intermin-

able to the boy's nervous excitement. As he plodded through the fast increasing drifts, his head bent, his hands in his deep pockets, his mind was still busy over the problem: how should he rid himself, without danger to his cause, of the man close at his elbow? An idea came to him which appeared to be most feasible of the many he had entertained. He proceeded to put it into operation.

"Hal, does not that path lead to the deserted huts?" he asked over his shoulder. "They cannot be far away."

"Not more than a quarter mile. In good weather they would be near. They are far in such a storm as this."

"I have a trap close by them."

"So I always suspected. Well, you must not try to visit it now. Keep on to Roxbury. It would be madness to wander from the main road when every landmark is changed by the snow."

Dick said nothing in reply. For a little longer time he walked on ahead of the other. Soon he began to lag, to pause, to rest, to drop behind. By and by it came about that he followed Hal in the path while the trapper led the way towards Roxbury. At intervals Richard murmured something about the deserted

huts, or his fine trap — enough to convince Hal that the notion of inspection was still running in his head and to induce the man to rebuke his foolhardiness in even entertaining such an idea.

“There is Roxbury at last,” he exclaimed when the dreary tramp had gone on for some moments in silence. “Dick, dost see? Food and a bed are before us.”

There was no answer.

Hal glanced backward. Richard must have fallen behind. No. There was no one there.

He raised his voice: “Ho, thou laggard Diccon, make haste.”

Still there was no answer.

The trapper stared in every direction. His eyes, accustomed to the darkness, roved hither and thither among the tree-trunks. He could see no sign of Dick, not even, because of the whirling storm, where his footprints had ceased to follow. The noises of a winter night in the woods, the crash of an ice-laden bough, the softer fall of a sliding drift, the call of a famished beast, or his stealthy pit-pat over the snow, — these alone came to his ears. There was no other sight or sound.

And yet, not ten feet away, Dick nestled against a fine old oak which hid his figure

from view. He dared not peer out to watch what Hal would do, but waited feverishly for the next move.

It was as he had hoped. After some indecision, some repeated and uncertain backward steps, the trapper growled in disgust : —

“There is no use in seeking him. I cannot risk my life because he risks his. The foolish fellow must find his way, as best he can, to the huts.”

So muttering, stamping his numb feet and swinging his long arms, he passed on along the path to the village.

He was no sooner out of sight and hearing than Dick emerged from his hiding-place. Striking out, according to his original plan, for an Indian settlement, he, too, was speedily sheltered for the night.

In choosing so young a messenger John Winthrop had not overlooked the lad's intimate acquaintance with all the coast region. Boys are usually keen observers and ardent explorers. The ex-governor, through his own and the Markhams' common friendship for Master Williams, was aware of Dick's remarkable woodcraft. When the time came to utilize such knowledge, it outweighed every disqualification.

From one group of bark wigwams to another the white boy, who had many friends among the natives, passed along the coast without especial hardship, until he had skirted the town of Lynn. Now only Salem, the haven of his hopes, lay before him.

And, at that point, he said to himself, his fortune turned. He was close to the sea, finding the beach better for walking than the forest farther inland. He had often glanced complacently out upon the dreary waters, while he thought: "No sign of the captain yet. I am distancing their messenger."

And then — one more such look destroyed every vestige of his boasting. There, away to the north, so far in advance that, for this reason alone, he had not noticed it before, a white sail appeared in the blue distance, flaunting against the sky. Captain Underhill was ahead of him. He would reach Salem first.

Dick clenched his fists in desperation: "Is it all for naught?" he said aloud. "Have I made the journey in vain? For how can I ever hope to overtake and pass the boat?"

Of course he remembered the innumerable windings of the coast. Underhill's route

must needs be circuitous, while there were many more direct ways for this foot-passenger to take. And yet the advantages seemed so greatly in the sailor's favor that Dick concluded he might well give up at once.

Still he did not give up. It was the habit of those pioneers never to see defeat this side of death, nor to acknowledge any evil as both inevitable and beyond remedy. Dick pushed on as rapidly and persistently as if his courage were high, and the reward which always comes to action — in due time — came soon to him.

The favoring breeze died down. A calm fell upon the sea. As he watched Underhill's little craft from afar he saw the sail again filled, but by a contrary wind. He witnessed feats of seamanship clumsily performed, and the frail boat beaten about here and there until, in utter surrender, its master made the best of his way to land.

"Now I have him," thought Dick.

In the long undulating line of coast, the point chosen by the captain for a camp was so prominent as to make his movements plain to this observer creeping along, himself in ambush, his gaze steadily upon the fire, the man beside it, and the boat pulled well up on

the sand. Darkness fell early on that winter day. Dick drew nearer the spot.

He left his direct route for the purpose of a visit, since another scheme had entered his busy mind at the sight of that bivouac. He had devised a way of outwitting the loud talking, brave, and profane soldier whom the last rays of the sun betrayed, wrapped in his cloak, lying in the lee of the boat close to the warmth of his fire.

Dick must wait until he slept. The boy hid himself among the trees, so close as he dared approach, keeping himself from freezing by unceasing exercise, rubbing his hands and feet with snowballs when all feeling ceased in them. He listened to the breathing of that muffled figure beside the fire, and by and by was overjoyed to hear an unmistakable snore. It was the first of many. Underhill was sound asleep.

Dick stole quietly from his covert, trod, with infinite care, the bare space that surrounded the fire, and approached the boat from the opposite side to where the captain lay. His long knife gleamed in the moonlight as he held it suspended. He crept, like a spectre, through the shadows, to the vessel's bow. Here he crouched, busying himself at

a tempting piece of the carpentry. By the moon's uncertain assistance he found the joining of two boards. His blade worked with confidence to make the rift he sought to effect. When this was accomplished he brought a thin, sharp stone, thrusting it through the hole down to the beach below. Underhill should fancy that the accident had happened from his careless handling of the craft along the rocky shore. As he could not set sail again before daybreak there was no further harm done the man than his delay. He ran no personal risk from his leaky boat, since its condition would be detected at once.

Dick himself must travel through the night. His object gained, he set out once more with all speed. He had no longer native allies to aid him. The Indian settlements throughout this part of his journey were those of strangers. So he ate the parched corn given at his last sleeping place, and pushed on, cold, tired, and footsore, towards Salem.

Roger Williams was holding that house service which had been forbidden by the Boston authorities. He was preaching the very doctrine for which they wished to banish him,

— the doctrine, now familiar, then abhorrent, that the State has no rights over a citizen's belief. He was earnestly setting forth his convictions at his fireside to a half-circle of eager listeners, when his wife interrupted him.

"Hist!" she raised her finger. "There is some one at the door."

Roger Williams glanced around him. "A late comer, perchance."

"Not so," the poor woman, wonted to alarms, persisted. "Every friend is here. This, my husband, must be an enemy."

She ran to the threshold. "Who is it?"

"Richard Markham."

With a joyful exclamation she pulled the bolt. Dick staggered into the room.

Before a question could be asked he thrust one hand into his doublet, producing Winthrop's letter. He advanced towards Master Williams.

"Make ready at once to fly," he said. "Underhill is on his way hither to bring you back with him to Boston. Thence you are to be sent across the sea. You must be gone to-night."

"Be gone — but where?" demanded Mary Williams wildly.

Dick waved his hand towards that white country which lay without the door. "To the wilderness," he answered. "The beasts of the forest are not so fierce as man."

CHAPTER III

UNDER THE BAN

"It seemeth strange," Dick observed to his father, "that such quiet folk as you and I should be always harassed by the quarrels of our neighbors. No sooner is the Williams controversy settled than comes this trouble with Mistress Hutchinson. Try so hard as we may, we cannot live at peace with all men."

The sick man regarded him intently. "'Tis the common fate of him who will espouse the weaker side. Thou dost not regret — so soon — thy choice?"

"Nay, nay, father," Dick hastened to say. "What care I for a few hard words? I but thought that the Hutchinsonians" —

"I do not go with Anne Hutchinson's teachings," Master Markham interrupted.

"Yet her little Nan is a good lass," Richard observed in a quite elderly tone. "And, father, we must take part with her, if not with the faction, when she cometh and bemoans her mother's plight."

Master Markham regarded his son very tenderly as the boy busied himself about the room, setting it in order. "Diccon, pay heed to me," he began. "I must give thee warning and commands. This business anent Anne Hutchinson — I may not see it out."

Dick, kneeling by the hearth, threw a quick, alarmed glance over his shoulder towards the invalid's bed. "Yes, sir," he whispered.

"If my fears prove true, wilt thou keep thy pledge to me? In this case, as in every like case, wilt thou help her and her children, no matter at what cost? Yet the cost should be counted, for it will be heavy. And foolhardiness is not courage, Dick."

He gazed wistfully on his boy — so young to leave alone, unguided, unadvised, to fight the battle of life!

"Yes, father," said Dick again.

He would not look up until those troublesome tears were gone from his eyes. He could not speak more at length until the lump was out of his throat, the lump that choked his breath. Still the sick man's loving glance rested upon him, and still Dick played with the tongs and adjusted and readjusted the backlog.

“Never run into danger,” the feeble voice went on, “but never shirk the consequences when you meet them deliberately. Be thine ever the part of helper, and deliver the letter,” his face twitched nervously, “so soon as thou art free to seek for him of whom I told thee.”

“Yes, father.”

“After — afterwards, it may be best that thou follow Roger Williams to his new settlement. He will have a kindly eye over thee, nor need he feel the money burden. From time to time I have saved for this. The purse hath some gold pieces to keep thee until — my good boy! — thou shalt care for thyself. And canst thou find thy way to Providence?”

His tone had an anxious note. Dick answered its distress by his hurried “Oh, yes, father.”

At this point they were interrupted by the entrance of the same Anne Hutchinson whom they had been discussing. She was a famous nurse, a kindly, capable person, who had performed many neighborly acts for the invalid and his son. Nevertheless they felt much annoyed by certain of her methods. Her teachings to other women were all well enough, they said in confidence together, not pretending to comprehend all of that mystic doctrine

concerning the indwelling Spirit that showed itself in the special grace under which this remarkable woman and her followers said they lived.

“But it doth not follow,” Dick contended, in private, at home, “that they should publicly insult a minister, by leaving the meeting-house when he beginneth to preach, or by putting impertinent questions to him, all because, as these Hutchinsonians hold, such an one is under the covenant of works and not of grace.”

He never made such criticisms to any save his father. To Nan he was all ready sympathy while she lamented the defeat for governor of Harry Vane, her mother's supporter, and the reëlection of John Winthrop, an implacable enemy to the band of zealots. Boston was convulsed by the religious disputation, following closely upon that from which Roger Williams had fled to Rhode Island. While Mistress Hutchinson ministered to his father, Dick left the house, in search of Nan and the latest intelligence from her.

When he returned with a full budget he found the invalid too ill to listen to his news. A sudden bad turn, Anne Hutchinson called it, which proved the precursor of others and the beginning of a swift decline.

In a week's time from that fireside talk Richard Markham was left an orphan.

Governor Winthrop was kind to him at first, so long, in fact, as he failed to observe the boy's intimacy with the Hutchinson family. After that happened he warned Dick sternly from the dangerous companionship, and ceased to interest himself further in Edgar Markham's son. Dick, meanwhile, was preparing for his removal to Providence, rather relieved that the settling of affairs went slowly, since he should not, in any event, have wished to leave Nan and her mother at this critical juncture. For Mistress Hutchinson was arrested on charges that were practically those of heresy.

"Will they condemn her to death?" sobbed Nan.

So soon as he learned of this last step in the persecution Dick had sought the desolate house, even more dreary in its grief than was his own, he concluded. He found the children gathered about their father, a colorless sort of man who offered them little comfort. His sons were far more efficient, and spoke bravely:—

"We will testify in her behalf, Nan," they reassured the girl. "We have each a vote, too,

and mayhap can persuade other voters besides our friends. Nay, nay, dry thy tears, sweet heart. Why should mother be condemned?"

"And if the worst come to pass," Dick added, "the sentence would not be death."

Nan looked up from her father's shoulder where her flaxen head was bent: "What then?"

Richard exchanged a significant glance with Luke: "Banishment," he said in a low voice.

Master Hutchinson wrung his hands: "Slow death, instead of speedy and merciful," he muttered drearily.

Dick felt a strong impulse to cuff this mourner. He, a man, the head of a house, to add to its miseries, in the place of any effort to lighten its load!

"That may not be," he persisted, while the young men chimed in with equal protest. "Think you how well, on the whole, Master Williams hath fared. In sooth, Boston is not so sweet a mother to me, nor to you, that we should part from her in sorrow. And there is room to spare, in the land about us, for many more plantations than those that flourish along the coast."

"Ay," the weak man assented, bowing his head on his breast. "But now, at the begin-

ning of winter, to be driven into the wilderness" —

"Master Williams suffered the like evil lot in midwinter. The savages sheltered him, he was forwarded in his schemes, and all hath prospered with him. Yet of what avail is this talk? How can we think of aught save our poor mistress in her prison? I trow her heart is stout."

Dick hoped to rouse Master Hutchinson by pride, if by no stronger sentiment. Nan answered his speech, drying her tears and assuming a resolute expression:—

"Thou art right. When mother was carried away she nor wept nor begged for mercy, but bade us each farewell like the valiant woman that she is. We should not forget, and play the craven, we who are her children."

Nan did not again forget. She was calm and composed throughout the time of the trial. She upheld her brothers in their resolution, when they spoke in Anne Hutchinson's behalf. She did not break down when the youths were admonished by Cotton, and, in consequence, disfranchised. This left the way clear. The prisoner was unanimously condemned to exile.

Richard and her brave sons had made

light of the possible sentence, the while they fully understood what it implied. When the strong, courageous woman returned to that home, which was hers now only while she could collect her faculties and her effects for flight, even her indomitable will was affected by the ordeal to which she had been subjected. She had left the presence of her judges with these words upon her lips: "Better to be cast out than to deny Christ."

Yet, as her children, and that great child her husband, clustered about her in forlorn greeting, she broke out, from the depths of her bitter soul: —

"Know you all whom you thus receive? A woman cursed for time and eternity: a woman, saith the governor, abandoned by God no less than man: what they bind on earth is bound in heaven. So the sentence ran. I am forsaken of my fellow-beings and of my Lord alike."

There was a pause while the full meaning of her cry came home to the minds of them all. Nan was the first to break that hideous stillness. She tightened the clasp of her arms about her mother. Her sweet, shrill voice rang out: —

"Dear madam, you never believed such

folly. Never for one moment did you think that man could come between a faithful soul and its God."

Mistress Hutchinson kissed the white face pressed against her own. "Bless thee, love," she murmured. "Nay, in sober truth, I did not so fancy. It was my pain that spoke, not I. I know the Lord is true, though every man be proved a liar."

She sprang from her chair: "Who is at the door?"

"No one, mother," Samuel Hutchinson began. "You but heard the wind."

"Not so. It was a step upon the walk without. Oh, they cannot have come, so soon, to drive us from this shelter."

No, for it was Dick Markham who raised the latch. Yet the sight seemed to terrify Anne Hutchinson almost as much as would those constables armed with their harsh authority. She took a step forward, waving back the intruder:—

"Away, away," she called. "You must not enter here."

"Wherefore, Mistress Hutchinson?"

"You know right well the reason. I am under ban. No one must speak with me. No one must offer me bread, if I am starving,

nor a cup of water, if I perish with thirst. Richard, you understand the penalty."

Before she could argue further there was another entrance. The constables appeared with their message of banishment. Anne Hutchinson had no time for further thought of Dick's affairs.

But one of these men caught sight of him in the midst of the commotion. It was Hal Goodwin the trapper. He drew Richard aside:—

"Escape," he whispered, "ere the others spy thee. I will cover thy going, if thou creep out by yon door, and at once."

"Why should I go?" asked Dick.

"Why? Thou hast not heard the fate of whosoever renders aid to Anne Hutchinson henceforth? He is placed beneath the ban with her. He is cursed for time and for eternity."

Dick gazed earnestly into the officer's stupid eyes: "That is the curse of man," he said slowly. "Hast forgot what shall be delivered, at the Judgment Day, on all who refuse such aid? I would abide under the displeasure of man rather than that of God."

Pulling himself from Hal's grasp, he took his place beside Mistress Hutchinson.

CHAPTER IV

A SAVAGE MENACE

AFTER Richard's bold step there was nothing for him except to leave Boston with the Hutchinsons. Fortunately this was precisely what he wished to do, as he found that they planned to seek Roger Williams, establishing themselves near Providence.

When Williams fled from Salem he abode, until spring, with Indian friends in their wigwams. With the milder weather he traveled farther afield, and was joined by his family and certain associates with whom the foundations of his colony were laid.

In the little party now following after him there was well-grounded alarm. However lightly, in the presence of their womenkind, the men and boys had treated this journey, they held many and anxious conferences, over their shielded camp-fire, after Nan and her mother were asleep. For a long time past there had been disturbances with the Indians which, as the only severe struggles between

natives and settlers, in over fifty years of neighborhood, deserve brief explanation.

The Pequods were lords of the forest, their name a terror to other savages. Sassacus, their sachem, in 1633, upon provocation, he declared, attacked and killed traders proceeding by river to Hartford. Persistent demands from Boston for the surrender of the murderers met with no response. Three years later John Oldham, sailing on the Sound, was slain by Block Island Indians subject to the Narragansetts. This was the proverbial last straw. Endicott proceeded to the island, found its inhabitants fled before him, but laid it waste, burning the wigwams, sinking the canoes, and killing all the dogs. He then crossed to the mainland, again calling for the Pequod assassins, with a thousand fathoms of wampum as damages. Receiving no response he attacked the savages, destroyed twenty of them, and laid their ripe corn low. After this he left the country. As Commander Lyon Gardiner of Saybrook said: —

“You come hither to raise these wasps about my ears. Then you will take wing and flee away.”

The old superstitions regarding the pale-faces were gradually fading before familiar

intercourse with them. They were pushing up into the Connecticut valley, encroaching upon the country of the Pequods, who were frenzied by Endicott's raid. Sassacus endeavored to arrange a treaty with the Narragansetts against the whites, whom nothing protected save the hereditary hatred between the two tribes. It was so strong, and Roger Williams's power over his new neighbors was so potent, that he persuaded Canonicus the chief to make a compact, instead, with the English. One may well believe there was some shame in the hearts of his persecutors when those dusky ambassadors arrived at Boston and informed Endicott and Cotton that they were induced to this course by the exile from Salem, who, at the entreaty of Harry Vane, had periled his life in his appeals to the natives.

But the Pequods, unassisted, could keep up a harassing warfare, horrid stories coming northward of what was happening upon the Connecticut.

"They catch men going to their work," said Master Hutchinson under his breath, "and kill them and cut out their hearts — to eat. So runs the tale. They kidnap boys to roast them alive. They attack a camp" —

His eyes were fixed, as he spoke, upon the blackness of the woods about him. His voice sank lower and lower until, fortunately for the nerves of his hearers, it became inaudible.

"'Tis a comfort to think," Samuel observed, with a would-be careless laugh, "that we go to the protection of good Master Williams, who hath such persuasion with the redmen round about him. He will prove our shield."

His brother, lying at Dick's elbow, pulled the lad by the sleeve: "Bring down thy head to mine," he muttered. "I would have private speech with thee."

Richard threw himself upon his face, inclining his ear to hear the secret.

Its beginning was no less startling than hideous: "Diccon, hast heard the brutal lie anent my mother, that she was called a witch?"

Dick's cheeks flushed with shame: "Ay, that I have. And I kicked right well the youth who dared to use such speech."

Anne Hutchinson's son plaited into an intricate pattern the pine needles he held in his fingers: —

"Thinkst thou not the horrid tale might serve our purpose here? The savages never

harm a lunatic. They fear aught that is supernatural with a very special fear. Should they fall upon us, to save her life, Diccon, hers and little Nan's, I would even tell my mother of the slander, and beg her to act the part. Wouldst thou blame me for that?"

His companion shot a shy, sidelong glance at the white, painstricken features. His own were set in an expression of tender pity as he answered: "Nay, I honor thee. I never held thee — and yet we have always been good friends, Luke — in so high respect."

But, though set in the midst of alarms, the journey towards Providence was accomplished in all quietness. Roger Williams's colony was reached, his welcome received, and the remembrance of that talk by the forest fire began to fade from the minds of those who were glad to thrust it back, out of sight, in their memories.

It was to arise again.

Richard now became a member of the Williams household. Mistress Hutchinson bought the island of Aquidneck of the Indians for forty fathoms of white beads. Here she and her family dwelt, for a time, in caves that they converted into tolerably comfortable homes. But Roger Williams, although a

gentle, tolerant man, was masterful. The woman preacher could never have written her name across the pages of our history unless she possessed as strong a will. It was not in nature that the two should long abide in peace together. Very soon Nan, meeting Richard at the Providence gate, one day, sorrowfully announced : —

“Dick, we are to move away. My mother will go hence.”

His countenance, that had brightened at sight of her, fell dismally : “Whither now?”

“To the Connecticut River.”

“To the Pequod country?” He gave an involuntary exclamation of dismay.

“Are you so sorry to have us go?” asked Nan innocently.

“Yes, very sorry,” was his reply.

He hastened to seek Luke Hutchinson, to inquire further, to make every remonstrance against this crazy plan. He was met by one unanswerable argument : —

“Saw you ever our mother moved by fear of consequences? She will depart, and there is an end on ’t. We have but wasted our breath, father, Samuel, and I, in appeals to her judgment on the matter.”

Dick’s comment sounded, at first, irrele-

vant : " Master Williams said, only this morning, that he would forward intelligence to a friend at Wethersfield. You go in a se'n-night's time ? "

" So my mother hath decreed. "

" I will question the master further. Mayhap he will intrust his message to me. Then may I accompany thy travels thus far. "

Luke comprehended the motives for this resolve: the hope of help, the worry as to their welfare which would keep them in sight so long as possible. If the friends had been two girls they would, at this juncture, have kissed each other, and cried a little. Being boys, they shrank diffidently from further speech on the subject. It was only when, at parting, Luke's hand rested, for an instant, on his companion's shoulder, as if by accident, that both understood the gesture to be meant for gratitude and a caress.

Roger Williams gave his consent to the expedition without questioning its rashness. He was a young man himself — twenty-seven, or thereabouts, and fond of adventure. Also he appreciated Dick's love for the Hutchinson family, so he bade them all God-speed, commending them to the hospitality of his acquaintance, Jeremiah Smith, of Wethersfield.

Thus they set forth once more.

There was a little dog in the party belonging to Nan. She, in her turn, was so humored by her mother that she was allowed this troublesome pet. Luke sometimes confided in Richard that, if Tray did not cease his barking at night, he certainly would yet be found with his throat cut.

"And I shall have done it," he added sternly, "sooner than allow our whereabouts' betrayal to the savages."

Still, while Nan welcomed her darling each morning, and Tray leaped upon her, licking her hands and her face, there was no likelihood that the indulgent older brother would carry out his threat. Dick was partly sorry, partly glad that it was so, since he understood how the beloved, restless little beast might imperil their safety. So matters stood when, rising one morning before daybreak, he stepped from the rude shelter they had built of boughs against yesterday's rainstorm. In the soft twilight he groped towards the embers of last night's fire.

"I will have a rousing blaze," he thought, "ready for Mistress Hutchinson to cook the breakfast. When the logs are well a-going will be time enough to fill the kettle at the spring."

He crouched before the ashy pile, groping about (the trees were so close together, and the morning was so overcast) for the tongs Samuel had fashioned of supple twigs. His hand hit something else, something he had not noticed before.

"Ah, Tray has selected the warmest spot for a bed," said Dick.

Then it struck him that, however cosy the nestling-place, Nan's dog was strangely cold.

"Ugh," he exclaimed at the same instant. "His hide is wet and — sticky. What is it smells thus on my fingers?"

A twinkling flame shot from the log. It zigzagged upward close to the boy's figure as he bent over the fire. By its light he could see what his hand had touched. It was blood.

He sprang upright, stirred the blaze to a fierce glow and inspected the little body at his feet. Tray had been slain deftly while he slept. A knife cut the small throat, at one slash, from side to side. But that was not the worst. Each of the paws had been severed. The tongue and ears were gone. Not far. At the entrance to the tent, where Mistress Hutchinson and her daughter slept, was a sickening sight. In a neatly arranged

circle lay the trophies of a midnight raid from the Indians.

Were they still close by? From the surrounding woods were eyes fixed on the boy, who crept within his own sleeping place, up to one prostrate form? He put his mouth against Luke's ear:

"The savages have visited us," he whispered.

They were ever apprehensive, never wholly off their guard. Not only was Luke wide awake on the instant, but the others, too, were on their feet. Dick told his story in a rapid undertone.

"This is not the last of it," was Samuel's comment, accompanying a shake of the head.

"It is the beginning," his father replied.

Luke and Dick said nothing. They gathered together their firearms, drew their knives from the scabbard, and pulled on the heavy coats which were called armor.

"I will go to the women folk," Dick observed, being ready first.

"Nay," Luke stepped before him. "I will go."

Then Richard remembered and understood.

Luke found his mother making her toilet by the firelight that shone through the drawn

tent flap. She always arose early to prepare breakfast. Nan was still asleep.

He went close to her, putting his arm over her shoulder. His lips were white. His eyes glistened feverishly.

"Dear madam," he began. "The savages are close at hand."

She started from his embrace: "Is it true?"

"Quite true. Mother, would you save our lives?"

"Thou canst ask!"

"Then play the part I give you. I shall tell them you are called a witch."

Anne Hutchinson's stern face set into strong, clear-cut lines: "You will not tell a lie, even for such cause."

Luke hung his head: "Nay," he answered, avoiding her astonished glance. "I will not tell a lie."

CHAPTER V

AS A WITCH

THERE was stamped forever upon Luke's mind the expression of agonized bewilderment which his mother bent on him.

"I never heard this — this calumny before," she said in a low voice.

He stooped to kiss her hand as if she had been a princess: "Your children would have concealed it from you always (such was their hope) had not this need arisen."

She was certainly a woman of remarkable character. At the recollection of their peril all personal feeling was set aside. "Tell me! Thou sayest the savages are approaching?" she broke in quickly.

Luke repeated Dick's story of what he had found. "An attack must follow," he concluded. "And, mother, would not the surest defense be the native dread of madness?"

"Yes, lad, I think it would."

While he roused and whispered to Nan what it was necessary for her to know, his mother

went to the small pile of luggage in a corner of the tent. She pulled one garment after another from its folds until a heap of incongruous clothing lay upon the ground.

"Go you to the others," she directed. "Keep all of you close together. Do nothing rash. I will join you soon, but, should you see or hear aught alarming, call me at once. Now go."

They found their father and the boys making a semicircle of fire about their sleeping-place which was built against a great rock that thus served as a protection. Nan was pushed well into the background amidst her protestations.

"There must be something I can do," she declared.

"Thou canst re-load our guns," Dick assured her. "And, if worst comes to worst, child," he handed her a knife, "thou knowest what to do with this?"

She took the dagger, thrusting it into her belt.

"I can stab straight," she said.

What awful days were those when the girl's father and her brothers heard her speech, and bowed their heads to show that she had spoken well.

They were alert, this little band, who realized themselves to be so weak, and they watched the forest aisles about them with unceasing vigilance. Yet now and then an impatient glance was cast towards the tent where Mistress Hutchinson still hid herself. What was she doing? Would she be in time?

"Is that rain?" Nan inquired.

There came to their strained ears a soft pat-pat, as of a summer shower falling upon the leaves. It caused each to spring to his appointed post. Every approach was guarded. At least they should not be surprised.

"Mother!"

As if Luke's call had brought them forth there was a rush from cover. A score of Indians threw themselves upon the encampment.

Their dark bodies, half naked, grotesquely decked, shone in the daybreak, while the leaping flames of the wayfarers' fire danced upon the polished surface of those waving arms, the brandished spears, or bows and quivers, for, thus far, the natives had not been supplied with the white man's weapons.

At their approach the tent flap was thrown back. A stately figure, majestic in its very wildness, stalked forward to the borders of the fiery circle. Those most familiar with her

aspect stared aghast at the transformation she had effected. The Indians paused, as one man, to gape at the apparition.

Anne Hutchinson had removed her coif, unbinding her hair, which hung in disorder about her shoulders. Almost the sole ornament of her Puritan household was a golden arrow, preserved because of its sentimental value in family tradition. She had wound Nan's little white kerchief around her head, and over her forehead gleamed the ornament. Across her sober dress was pinned a scarlet blanket. From it waved bits of clothing torn into fantastic rags, fluttering, when the woman moved, adding a touch very like horror to the impression she created. Her eyes glared blankly before her. The tent and the bough shelter were side by side, so that, in her advance beyond the group her family made, she seemed to lead them all. They saw the glitter of a long knife in one bare, gaunt arm ; they caught the commands that her voice gave out in a sort of chant.

The coming of the English to that coast had been attended by the visitation of the plague. To all the natives those mysterious strangers were objects of awe at least. Most of them connected the devastating sickness of

twenty years before with the advent of the white men. Although that terror had fallen asleep, it was, as Luke had shrewdly guessed, not difficult to awaken. The band of warriors shrank before the menacing form that beckoned across the flames. They shuddered at the weird notes of her droning song, for how could they translate its sentences?

“Luke, hand me one of the dog’s paws.

“Fall on thy face and crawl to me.

“Kiss the hem of my robe, Luke.

“And show an abject horror, too.”

Such orders, thrown into the metre of her tune, were followed out, while the others kept their guard behind the two. The Indians watched, and the pale-faces watched. Luke crouched at his mother’s side, as if afraid to approach her. She took the poor pet’s severed foot from him, and, with uncouth gestures, threw it from her into the fire.

“Luke, crawl back and bring me another paw.

“You others shout that I am called a witch.”

So the chant went on.

A hoarse chorus rose to the sky. There was no one of them but knew certain phrases, often employed in intercourse with the natives.

“Beware, begone! The white men call her a witch,” they cried.

In the act of casting the second oblation to the flames, Anne Hutchinson heard a gasp of relief from the youth cowering at her feet.

“They fly,” he muttered.

There was the same subdued pattering, as of a rainfall. They had come, and so departed, instantly, almost in silence. Overpowered by what they did not understand, the savages had failed to strike a blow.

The collected, ready-witted woman addressed her family: “We will not give their terror time to subside. Let us hasten on to Wethersfield. And I—I will wear this dress meanwhile. I shall,” with a scornful smile, “continue to play the witch. They may repent, and overtake us, or we may encounter others in the way.”

Neither contingency arose. The remainder of their journey was made in entire safety, although in constant apprehension. On the evening of the second day thereafter the party drew near to the village’s stockade.

Here more strong arms to fight were required and more weapons to wield, for the plantation was in a state of suspense. Jeremiah Smith received the newcomers into his

family, soon making occasion to draw Master Hutchinson and the lads aside for a full statement of affairs.

"The truth is," he said, "that Endicott's raid did infinite harm to us. The Pequods are roused to fury, while we here must fight against it. They have harassed us unceasingly. A fortnight since two red fiends captured a luckless fellow gone without the gates to hunt. I myself saw the attack, but from this distance. I could see, and I could do nothing. They were ten to one. So they caught poor Carew, carrying him away. Yet not so far," his voice shook, "that I failed to witness their merciless sport with him."

He clutched his gun: "Pray that you may never be delivered into those hands. Better, a thousand fold, the cruelest instant death."

Such hints were sufficient. All could guess what ingenuity of torture had been meted out to the miserable captive. His successful seizure, the fact that the plantation durst not resent it, betrayed such weakness to the savages as incited them to a bolder stroke.

Within twenty-four hours of the Hutchinson's arrival Samuel and his father were drafted to act on the town guard for the night. Dick walked with the former to his

station, and on his return down the street fell in with his host, so evidently perturbed that he paused for inquiry.

“What hath gone wrong, Goodman Smith?”

“Sukey the cow.”

“How mean you?”

“I mean that with all my care she hath strayed from pasture. There is a bit of green meadowland, under the stockade’s shadow, where sometimes we drive the cattle to graze. But not in such times as these! Yet my silly little lad, so he hath confessed, did take the creature thither, not an hour ago. The guard supposed I gave him warrant, allowing him out the gate. He was frightened by some sound—thank Heaven for that!—so that he ran back to safety, leaving Sukey without. Now I must have the cow.”

“Is there like to be scarcity of food?” Dick asked, with a worried frown. If this were so, they had brought but little with them, and six mouths the more to fill.

“We have no provision to spare, should this state of siege continue, and it is that, in reality, when we know not what danger lurks outside the walls. We require the milk, and we may require the beef. I must have the cow.”

He made a motion, as if he would pass the boy. Dick threw himself before him.

“Nay, that is my duty. I will go.”

“Thy duty? Why?”

“Because I brought myself and these others, my friends, hither, to prey upon your stores. Goodman, let me seek the beast. It is my place, I tell you. I will fetch her back to you, if so may be.”

Jeremiah Smith stood in an attitude of irresolution. He would not shield his own life at the risk of his guest's, and that a mere boy, the adopted son of Master Williams, who had but now done him one of many services by the very errand upon which Richard had come. Yet, in such times, a life was not so sacred a thing as now. On occasion it must be freely offered, and freely taken: the relative value of one with another must, moreover, be often measured, as was here an instance. This lad was of no such importance in the world as his host, a husband, a father, an esteemed member of the community.

“Go, then, and may God take care of thee,” said Jeremiah Smith.

He accompanied Dick to the gate, explained his errand to the guard, and watched him step without. Only some fifty rods away

the missing cow was peacefully grazing, as each could see. Ordinarily it would mean nothing to capture her. To-day each rod of the fifty was to be crossed with one's life in one's hand.

Dick flung himself on the ground, creeping forward through the grass. He would take every advantage of his position. He would do nothing unavoidably dangerous. So he resolved, while he crawled along the slope.

Before he had traversed a yard of space, and despite his prudence, he raised himself on one elbow. Nature was too strong for caution.

For the air was full of a sound that thrilled him. It was the warwhoop.

CHAPTER VI

THE ATTACK ON WETHERSFIELD

RICHARD was hidden from the attacking force, partly by his position, partly by the gathering twilight, but more by the Indians' very ferocity, as they leaped forward. So intent were they upon the fray that their wavering line swept past and never noticed the boy's form lying in the grass.

He raised his head cautiously to peer after their flying figures. How many were there against whom the little village must defend itself? The Pequods, although a great tribe, despised a plantation which did not dare resent their former attack: they were only some fifty strong. Wethersfield could muster about half so many men.

"Two to one are not impossible odds," thought Dick, as he sprang to his feet.

He ran towards the gate. As he was about to enter it, he went at full speed against a fugitive. From within the stockade already came the shots of the watch, the guttural

savage cry, the screams of children, a roar of orders, defiance or encouragement, as the men and boys collected upon guard. Yet here was a renegade. A puny lad, with flowing red hair and pinched features, ghastly white, clutched at Dick's sleeve, in his flight past, — Dick had never seen him before, — and called the warning: —

“The savages! The savages! Save thyself.”

That pleasant old gossip, Plutarch, tells us how, in an African battle, Julius Cæsar encountered a fleeing soldier. Taking the man by his shoulder the incomparable general wheeled him about so that he again faced the foe, while he said: —

“Friend, you made a mistake. The enemy is there.”

Dick had never heard this anecdote, although his action, if less politic, was similar. He threw his musket upward, so that with it he could administer a smart rap upon the fellow's back.

“Turn again,” he cried in fury. “Thou shalt do thy part in the defense, or I shoot thee down where thou standest.”

“It is of no avail,” pleaded the coward. “They are a hundred to our score. ’Tis every man for himself, I tell thee.”

"It is never every man for himself," Dick answered between his teeth.

He seized the other by the collar and flung him through the gate, himself close at his heels.

It was pandemonium upon which they entered. Down the little street stretched one long battle line. Every man and boy in the settlement stood in an irregular row that screened the Commonhouse into which the women, with their children, were hurrying. No, not every man, for two lay dead upon the ground, their bodies riddled with arrows. Richard kicked and cuffed his still protesting companion into station beside himself in this undulating line.

"I have no weapon," declared the lad, almost in tears.

"Take mine." Dick thrust his gun into the nerveless fingers. "See that thou use it, too, or — I shall be close at hand! If thou dost not fight, and well, I have a knife here — look!"

He breathed the threat, while he made a swift movement forward, snatched a musket from another falling figure, and recovered his position, again fully armed.

The savages seemed supplied with an in-

exhaustible store of those formidable arrows tipped with brass or the claws of birds. A shower pelted incessantly upon the defenders. One by one they fell before it. It was like an awful rain wherein a man might as well expect to escape a wetting as here to go free from harm. Several of the missiles struck Dick, none inflicting serious hurt. He saw that the cowardly boy at his side was wounded in the thigh.

"Now he will run," thought Richard.

But — one could be amused, even at such a moment, surrounded by such sights — the blow seemed to arouse what fighting instinct there might be in the red-haired boy. With a yell of mingled pain and anger he fell upon his assailants.

"Let me at you, fiends," he called. Single-handed, he engaged two of them in combat.

Dick cried caution, as did others. Jeremiah Smith added loudly: "He is brave as a lion, the young rogue," and Dick, with a smile, devoted himself to his own stern work once more.

One by one the white men were falling, although before their guns it was two by two that the savages dropped. Still, they were

many, — enough for their task, at least, — and the defense was piteously small. The ranks must constantly close up to fill a comrade's vacant place. Dick lost sight of his late companion, when, presently, he found himself beside Samuel Hutchinson.

"Are the women and children all safe, know you?" the boy inquired, as he reached back for the ammunition supplied to them from the door of the Commonhouse.

"I think so. But make sure. Ask some one."

Dick could not avert his eyes for one instant. After he had taken steady aim and fired, he thrust one hand again behind his back, received the match, and questioned its giver.

"How many are ye there?"

"Eight women and three children."

"Eleven," commented Samuel and Dick together. "There should be fifteen."

Both remembered that the farthest house was Goodman Smith's. Had their women-kind, with their hostess and her daughter Mary, failed to reach the gathering place? Dick could scarcely frame his next query:

"Who are not with you?"

"Jane Smith, for one, and Mary another.

Then Anne Hutchinson and her girl. These are all."

All !

" Dick, we must make our way to them."

" I know. Yet we are needed here. They cannot hold the place without us. See seven — no eight men have fallen now."

Another dropped to the ground as he spoke. But while the lads hesitated in that keenest agony, an uncertain duty, the path was made clear before them. To their amazement, the entire opposing force, on the instant, was moved by some intelligence that was passed from man to man. A demoniac light crossed the cruel faces. The score of savages, all that remained, by this, of the fifty who had entered Wethersfield, turned about and were gone.

The besieged stared at one another in bewilderment. What could it mean? Their Commonhouse was unmolested. They had no one to fight.

Dick and Samuel, when they saw the direction of the Indians' flight, guessed the reason all too well. Both took to their heels and flew down the street. Toward the Smith homestead by the shortest route — by any route — they chased. Horrid fear spurred

them on even while it choked the breath, impeding their progress like a heavy hand laid upon the heart.

Some prying native, broken away from his fellows, had strayed hither first and learned the truth. The savages knew that in those four defenseless creatures they had the means at hand for torture beyond all other pain. The men dropping before their arrows at the Commonhouse door would die a thousand deaths rather than that these poor souls, cowering in yonder cabin, should be discovered. So all else was neglected for a novel chance of persecution.

Luke and his father, unwitting what had happened, confident that they were shielding their own with the others, stood in the group on the village square. The older brother, Dick at his elbow, sped along the narrow lane, hideously impeded by dead bodies, until suddenly, in one moment, they came to a full stop.

Not that their destination had been reached. The house was thirty yards away. But there was no need to go farther.

The Indians were returning. A leaping, garrulous, exultant throng bore down upon the two lads. That was all they saw at the

first glimpse, although it told the whole story.

"They have found the women," said Samuel.

The shower of arrows that flew about their ears, as the savages caught sight of them, fell unheeded (as, happily, they fell aimless) in the mad thoughts which alone could occupy the two. Well for them, also, that even those great quivers, hanging from the naked shoulders, were not literally inexhaustible. From the last volley remaining, the boys received nothing worse than a few bruises. Samuel and Dick, by a common impulse, swung their empty guns like clubs; each smote down a grinning savage, and then, before those supple figures could close with them in hand to hand combat, their knives flashed threateningly through the air.

By this time Dick had caught sight of the captives guarded in the midst of the advancing force. He looked again yet more sharply :

"Your mother is not there. Nor Nan," said he.

Valiantly did the lads struggle on in their efforts to fight their way through the ranks to Goodwife Smith and Mary. They were over-

come by the mere strength of numbers, irrespective of the superior powers of trained warriors against their youth. They learned that the Indians' bare hands could prove effective for repulse. When some of them drew stone knives, or tomahawks, — not all were thus armed, — Dick stumbled, endeavored to wipe out of his eyes the blood that flowed from a slash across his forehead, but fell heavily forward, seeing, in a last glance, that Samuel had gone down before him.

He heard the rush of those trampling feet bearing off their prey, while he struggled heavily to his feet once more, fighting off the faintness that wrapped him about like a pall. There was Samuel, too, a red stream trickling down one arm, springing upright. Neither spoke while they ran forward, on, on, to the house where, that early afternoon which was ages past by now, they had parted from Nan and her mother.

So quickly had all this occurred that the April dusk was not yet changed to darkness when they stood before the little house. It was riddled and desecrated by ruthless invaders, smouldering from the fire they sought to kindle, although another hand had quenched the flames.

The hand was brave Anne Hutchinson's. In her eerie dress, which she had deemed it imprudent to lay aside, with her streaming hair and scarlet blanket, the golden arrow shining above her forehead, she crossed the threshold to greet the lads. Nan clung to her skirts.

"Thank God, you are safe," cried Samuel.

"Quite safe," his mother answered, with a calm, sad smile. "There are compensations, my son, in that I am deemed a witch."

CHAPTER VII

DESERTED

THE youths considered it wisest to take their womenkind, without delay, to the Commonhouse, since there was comparative safety in numbers. As they hastened on Samuel inquired how it was that, under the same roof, Nan had been saved by her mother's craft while Goodwife Smith and Mary had been taken captive in spite of it.

"They became frightened by the burning of the house," Anne Hutchinson explained. "When the flames broke out there was no restraining them, although I had prepared them when — when we saw we were surrounded, and that there was no other deliverance. Nan and I besought them, with tears, not to forsake us, but, maddened with terror, they rushed from the door. They were captured upon the instant."

They found poor Jeremiah Smith raving like a maniac when they reached the Commonhouse, whither the tidings of his loss had

preceded them. The Indians quitted Wethersfield so soon as they had secured their prey. A party was already organizing to follow upon their track, and, if possible, rescue the women. Exhausted as were the men by the conflict through which they had passed, every one remaining in the settlement pressed forward with offers of service. All told, men and boys, they were but fifteen now. Ten bodies lay still in the moonlight that flooded the street.

Despite his efforts to tread reverently, Dick stumbled over one rigid form. He stooped to drag it to one side, out of the path, and saw that it was the corpse of a boy : a boy with flowing red hair and a white face, on which the expression was very sweet and gentle in death.

Luke Hutchinson hurried up to assist him. " Ah, brave lad," he exclaimed, recognizing the features over which they stooped. " He fought at my right hand, and how he fought ! He was stouthearted as any hero. He may well serve us for a pattern, Dick, and a lesson not to surrender even with all against us."

Richard made no response. " I drove him back to this," he mused. " Yet I cannot regret what I did. There was work here

waiting, and no one else could take his share. Surely, 't was an instance where, if he had saved his life, it would have been to lose it."

His reflections were interrupted by Master Hutchinson's voice calling him aside.

"Thou hast offered to join the rescue party?" he asked.

"Yes. Does it start at once?"

"The others go without delay. Richard, I would have thee bear me company. There is a new plan but now arranged."

Dick listened, with an impatient frown hidden in the dark, while the slow, deliberate tones laid before him this arrangement hastily concocted among the group of men.

Two of them were to be dispatched to the other plantations with news of what had happened to-night. If a concerted action could be arranged, an embassy should start instantly to Plymouth and Massachusetts, appealing there for assistance in putting down the savages. Master Hutchinson was selected for this office, and, since so precious a message could not be trusted to one person, he had proposed Dick as a companion.

They started in that very hour. It is not necessary to follow their movements, as they were not marked by any incident of impor-

tance beyond the moment. Massachusetts contributed only twenty men to the campaign upon which the settlements had agreed. A campaign, it should be, of absolute extinction.

“We must wipe these Pequods from the face of the earth,” blustered Captain Underhill. He was in command of the little company sent down to the river. Dick and Master Hutchinson attached themselves to these soldiers, who were joined by seventy Mohegans under Uncas, and ninety white men, with Captain John Mason, collected at Saybrook from all parts of Connecticut. Master Stone was to accompany them as chaplain. That night before they set sail, the night of May 19, 1637, was partly spent in prayer. It was a bloody task that these men undertook. At the least they did not enter upon it without deep conviction that they were called to its thorough execution.

Master Hutchinson joined his sons here. Dick’s first question was in regard to the Smith women.

He learned that they had been recovered by Wouter Van Twiller, director general of New Netherland, who had come to the help of his neighbors. The details kept the friends whispering together, under their cloaks, until

the stars faded out in the pink sky of a spring daybreak.

They floated down the river, on that May morning, set sail for Narragansett Bay, and passed the mouth of the Pequod, now known as the Thames. Luke called Richard's attention to, here and there, a sleek red body gliding from tree to tree along the shore. The faraway echo of a cry was brought to them across the water.

"It sounds like triumph," said he. "Dost suppose we could be running into any trap?"

"More like," Dick answered, "they think us departing from the coast, driven out by dread of them. To my fancy that was their farewell to the white men, that shout of victory."

"They will see," was the grim response.

On a brilliant moonlight night they landed in the harbor near Point Judith. It was Saturday, so they encamped, lying quiet over the following day. On Monday morning messengers were dispatched to Canonicus, the old chief of the Narragansetts, asking him and his nephew to join their forces against these longtime oppressors and rulers over all that region. The younger sachem held back. Terror of the Pequods was stronger even than hatred.

"You can do nothing against them with your handful of men," said he.

Canonicus listened more favorably to the ambassadors. They returned with four hundred Narragansetts and Nyantics. A march began to the westward. The one hundred and ten white men walked in sober order, armed with muskets and knives. Their savage allies, more accustomed to the country, wonted to warfare, and inured to all the hardships of such an expedition, yet behaved peculiarly from the start.

Underhill and Mason often conferred together over this conduct, unlike as it was to the demeanor of their own men, or unlike anything they had hitherto witnessed in their intercourse with the natives.

"I believe," quoth Mason judicially, "that they are afraid."

Underhill's answer, stripped of his usual vulgarity and oaths, was simply this :

"Suppose they desert us at the last moment? You know there are a thousand Pequods in these forts we are approaching."

"I know," was Mason's reply.

"Then what if the savages refuse to move against them?"

"We go on alone," said John Mason.

Near what is now Stonington stood the two strongholds of the Pequod nation. They were walled villages, built in a circle of two or three acres in area. This gigantic ring was edged by a palisade of strong saplings set deeply into the earth. The interstices served for loopholes through which the approach of foe or friend could be detected. At opposite sides in the girdle of trees were two openings so narrow that it seemed as if nothing save a snake — or an Indian — could squeeze through them. Within the walls were crowded a collection of wigwams, seven hundred in one town, three hundred in the other. It was towards the larger of the two that Mason was marching his men on that May evening.

The Mohegans, the Narragansetts, and the Nyantics, creeping, tribe by tribe, behind the white men, continued to mutter and scowl and pass from one to another the sly comments that had roused their leaders' suspicions when coupled with the various excuses they concocted for delay.

The moon went down. It was dark in the woods, where the subdued tread of many feet alone broke the silence. A gap between the trees showed the dim outlines of a great hill rising across the path.

A murmur of awe ran from rank to rank :
“It is the home of Sassacus.”

“What are they saying?” asked Mason of a native who walked between himself and Underhill.

They were using the man as guide. He had offered his services at Saybrook, explaining that, although a Pequod, he would willingly lead them on their errand of destruction, for the mighty chief Sassacus had wronged him, and he longed for revenge. This savage craving for vengeance was often a weapon in the hands of the English.

“They are terror-stricken,” the Pequod answered, proud, after all, of the dread his people could inspire. “They point to the town, and say : ‘There dwells Sassacus, first of all the redmen.’ ”

Mason eyed the Indian with cool gravity :
“Tell them,” he commanded, “that the youngest boy among us white men is stronger than Sassacus.”

The native sullenly complied. He glided along the line, Mason watching him as well as he could in the uncertain light.

“Boasting never faileth with children such as these,” he observed to Underhill.

The Massachusetts captain retorted in his

usual strain. It was to the effect that this might be true, and yet here rise an instance where Sassacus's influence was more potent than their own.

So it would appear. The Pequod returned with the assurance that he had faithfully rendered the message given him. Still, a few yards farther on, at the base of the towering hill where their climb to the fort must begin, there was a sudden halt. A quiver ran through the little army. A movement, that was not progress, was apparent among the men. They were silent. No word passed. But they stood still, although they stirred !

“What does this mean ?” Mason demanded.

Again the native stole away into the gloom. Again, after a moment of waiting, he came back to the leaders.

“What do they say ?”

“They say — it cannot be done ! Sassacus is a god. Nothing will avail against him. They refuse to move.”

Mason stepped aside to command a view of his band of white men. They were one hundred and ten, all told, against a thousand savages.

“Forward ! March !” said he.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SACHEM'S STRONGHOLD

THE colonists moved on as one man. There was not a glance backward at the deserters. Steadily, in a dead silence, they began to mount the hill.

At the same moment a singular sound came to them through the night. The natives cowered before it. The Pequod, that one red man still faithful, was startled from his stoicism, catching nervously at Underhill's coat. It was a mighty shout of triumph, the savage song of victory that rolled down to them from the stronghold of Sassacus.

The bravest heart was stirred. Yet those men were all heroes. They marched on quietly, quietly in spirit as in body, up the hill.

The attack was a masterly manœuvre. The surprise was complete. It was in the darkness before the dawn that John Mason passed his last order along the line. He with sixteen men (the Hutchinsons and Dick being of this

force) were to enter by the nearest gate. Underhill, with the remainder of the men, would proceed to the farther entrance.

“Remember,” said he in conclusion, “this is a fight for our homes. Either these savages must own the valley henceforth, and we be driven out, or we must utterly destroy the foe from before us. Now, at them!”

With his band he made a dash for the narrow gate. He pushed through first himself alone. One by one the sixteen followed him. Despite the chanting in the wigwams, the guard set before the gate were not, as Mason expected, awake and alert. They nodded over their fire, bent into an uncomfortable posture that was neither one of sleeping nor watching. A little dog lay at an Indian's feet, so close to Dick, as he entered the great circle, that he had nearly stepped on it before the flickering flames betrayed its whereabouts. He was awed by the terrible situation, by the responsibility and the danger. His movements were awkward. In his endeavor to avoid the outstretched animal his gun fell, the muzzle striking the dog's forepaw.

The startled brute leaped up. Its yelp woke the echoes. In an instant the guard were roused. They were so near to Mason

and his followers, stealing through the straight gap into the inclosure, that they could reach out their hands and touch the intruders. Still the pæan sounded through the fort, still the Pequods in yonder huts rejoiced over the discomfited flight of the pale-faces.

“They have left us to possess our inheritance in peace,” so the chant went on. “We have driven them away and shall see them nevermore. Our land is free to us for all time to come.”

“The English! the English!” called the guard.

Mason was waiting for the signal that should show him Underhill and the larger band were entering by the farther gate. It came now. His shout answered, and the two forces rushed to meet each other, threading their way among the wigwams, firing, yelling, cutting down the savages who crossed their path.

The Indians were maddened by the surprise. It roused all their latent horror of the colonists, and they scarcely attempted resistance. The ferocity which had instigated and furthered their onslaught upon the feeble settlements was gone when it might defend their home. They ran hither and thither

like hunted rabbits, striving only to reach the gates and so escape.

Yet there were so many of them, even in this despicable condition : they so far outnumbered their attackers ! Mason plucked a brand from the fire and blew its smouldering ash into flame.

“ We must burn them out,” he called and tossed the stick to the nearest roof.

It was covered with dry reeds. They caught like tinder. The fiery sparks danced away in every direction. The wigwams almost touched one another, so closely were they set together. Directly the entire space was one blaze of flame.

Now there was nothing for it save to run away. Many were burned in their huts, but all attempted flight and struggled towards the gates. Here they encountered an implacable watch. Before the supple bodies could slip through the narrow space they were mercilessly attacked. It was unrelenting, hideous slaughter.

Perhaps no incident in our early history receives such half-hearted apology as John Mason’s deed in the Pequods’ stronghold. We shrink from the cruelty, the deliberate shedding of blood. But, because it was delib-

erate, we should remember that those men who thus massacred their foe firmly believed the end to justify the means. Strong only in their cleverness and in their clear sense of right, they wrought the woe of that spring night, sure that no softer measures would avail if they would preserve their homes and protect their families.

Dick was ordered to the gate after Mason — his eyes were everywhere at once — discovered that a man in the guard had fallen and another was wounded. It was, of all tasks, the most revolting to the lad. He saw, with a pitiful horror, that, although he and his fellows were gradually but irresistibly borne down by the onward rush, ever growing wilder, of the maniac fugitives, outside, at the foot of the hill, the Indian allies lingered and met the flying Pequods. They dared not openly attack Sassacus and his men, but they would shoot down the miserable runaways. Their warwhoop was borne up the slope, adding another to the horrors of that night. They might be depended upon to thoroughly finish the carnage.

The boy's attention was momentarily occupied in tying a bandage on Master Hutchinson's arm. He felt his own sleeve twitched. He looked over his shoulder.

A native had paused here, panting, bleeding from a cut across his face, yet in some way so majestic, so dignified, even in his distress, that Dick exclaimed : —

“ It is Sassacus, the chief ! ”

“ Because I am he,” said the red man haughtily, “ save me.”

“ Because you are hurt, and helpless,” was the lad’s response. “ There ! ”

He indicated an opening in the stockade, made by the spreading flames. He had covered it by débris so soon as it was detected, but he proceeded to pull something of this aside. His heart ached for the fallen sachem. In the frightful scenes of that frightful place nothing had so touched him as Sassacus’s appeal to him — a boy — for rescue.

The man bowed gravely, dashed through the pliant saplings and was away. In the gloom without, since he did not belong to the mass that choked the gates, he stood some chance of evading the Narragansetts. At all events, this was the utmost that Richard Markham could do for him.

The watch proved less and less adequate to guard the exits, although they could hear enough of what the savages on the plain below were about to see that, sooner or later, the Pequods were cut down.

"How long, think you," Dick gasped to Master Hutchinson, "must this bloodshed continue? We have been about the horrid business for hours!"

"Truly," was the despondent reply. "Yet there can be no respite, as I see, while one Pequod remains alive."

They really thought the time had been of tremendous length since they entered the fort, though neither remembered, in such excitement, to wonder why the sun refused to rise. In exactly one hour from the moment their attack began John Mason wiped his sword.

"The last man is down," said he to Underhill. "Let us go without the stockade and see what the savages have done."

A weird picture presented itself to them. Three hundred natives from the smaller fort, attracted by the flames and the sounds of conflict, were approaching the hill. Of the seven hundred men who had been set upon but five had escaped. Two of the English were killed, sixteen were wounded. The Indians in the valley might, since their fighting instinct was aroused, help to keep the newcomers in check, but there could be no dependence placed upon them.

"I call for volunteers," said Mason. "A

dozen men to hold those back," he waved his sword towards the Pequods, "while the rest of us embark for home."

These late arrivals stamped and raved at the sight before them. It was a company of lunatics whom the exhausted soldiers must face.

Every white man offered to be of that dozen. Mason quickly selected his men. There were no boys chosen. Dick set sail with the larger part of the English.

Before the summer ended that nation which had ruled the New England forests was utterly destroyed. Early in June Captain Stoughton arrived from Massachusetts with one hundred men. The Pequods, who fled at their approach, were followed, their villages razed, and those seeking shelter in the swamps were hunted out. Some of them were sent to the West Indies as slaves, others were absorbed into the tribes of the Mohegans or the Narragansetts.

So far west as the site of Fairfield the fight continued, until there was no one left who called himself a Pequod. Dick learned, with a throb of pity, that Sassacus, who had fled across the Hudson to the Mohawks, was treacherously slain by his hosts, and his scalp sent to Boston for a peace offering.

The Indians all sought to make friends with the white men. In New England the brief, decisive war had taught its lesson. Not for thirty-eight years, not until another generation, who did not recall those days, arose, was there again a native rebellion.

CHAPTER IX

HIS FATHER'S LETTER

"SHOULD I sail from Manhattoes," said Roger Williams, "I shall still send Richard before me to Lady Deborah Moody at Gravenzande."

He spoke calmly, although he must have acutely felt the injustice which made him, an outlaw, unable to use the port of Boston from which to take passage to England. And it was necessary to the existence of his colony that he return to the Old World. Massachusetts, Plymouth, New Haven, and Connecticut had already allied themselves together, to their increased protection and strength. They not only refused to allow Providence and Rhode Island to enter the confederation, but strove, as well, to encroach upon their rights and territory. The sole safeguard was to obtain a charter for themselves. This Master Williams was to secure.

He addressed his wife, yet, as Dick was present, the family being at breakfast, the

boy understood that this information was for himself no less. He looked up blankly.

“Oh, sir, it had been my hope that I should accompany you.”

Roger Williams was the kindest of men. It hurt him to disappoint his ward, no matter how needfully.

“I cannot take thee, Richard,” he began; “and I do think thou couldst be of use to my friend, the Lady Deborah. I would that thou bide for a season with her after thou hast delivered these news; she may want another strong arm to aid her.

Richard endeavored to be respectful. Still, he was very persistent: “I could join you at the fort,” he hinted, “if, by the time you came thither, the savage uprising had been put down.”

He might have known that Williams, with all his gentleness, was as determined as himself.

“It cannot be,” was the decisive answer. “Fain would I please thee, lad, but I must not be burdened, for this journey, with thy care.”

Dick saw that the good pair were regarding him with an expression in which was as much curiosity as pity.

“Why dost so long to visit thine old

home?" asked Mistress Williams. "Thou wert a mere babe when thy father brought thee away. Thou canst remember naught thereof — if there were any pleasant remembrance," she added bitterly, "whereupon a Puritan could dwell. Thou hast no kith nor kin in the wide world. Why shouldst thou speak of a return to England?"

Richard pushed away his pewter plate with an air of sudden resolution: "I will tell you," he answered, "what I have never told human being. My father bade me go."

Roger Williams uttered an exclamation of surprise. "He ne'er spoke thereon to me."

"Nor often to me," Dick added. "He was not one to give me of his confidence. Yet, when I was a little lad, he bound me by an oath. 'T was that I would ever help the helpless, — take the weaker side, as he was wont to say, — and would, one day, seek out a certain man, deliver to him a letter, whilst I offered him my service, to the very laying down of life itself. Once my father told me that it was most unlikely the man should come to America. I must look for him in England."

Mistress Williams knit her brows in a bewildered frown. "I do not understand,"

she broke in. "Was this mysterious man so great a friend to Edgar Markham?"

"I think he must have been. But I know no more than I tell to you. I was told no more myself."

Roger Williams could not restrain a smile at his wife's expression of baffled inquisitiveness. Possibly, he, too, was a trifle disconcerted to learn that there could be no explanations.

"I have the letter," Dick went on, "and the man's name upon it. I bear it in a pouch here — safe. Before I give it up, after the meeting and the question, 'How, sir, can I please you best?' then I am to read what my father wrote to him."

"May I see the name?" asked Williams. "For I might meet the owner, and could tell you of his whereabouts."

"That is true," reflected Dick, unfastening his doublet. He drew the letter from its leather case and handed it across the table to his guardian. As he did so none could avoid noticing that it was unsealed. Master Williams copied the address upon his tablets, and returned the package.

"This maketh me the more inclined," he conceded, "to hearken to thy plea, were it

possible to grant it, son. It is not possible at this time. Thou shalt a little longer possess thy soul in patience. Some day"—

Richard sighed.

A little later, his message to Lady Deborah impressed upon his mind, the boy was dispatched to Manhattan, where the "Apostle of Religious Liberty," as Williams was called later, not then, was to follow him when his own preparations were completed for the voyage across the ocean.

Several years had passed since Richard parted from the Hutchinson family, establishing themselves in the now peaceful valley of the Connecticut, while he proceeded upon his homeward course to Providence. He never forgot Luke and Samuel; he often thought of Nan. Still, communication was uncertain. He heard little of their movements save the intelligence of Master Hutchinson's death, and, later on, of the others' emigration to the neighborhood of Fort Amsterdam.

New Netherland was gathering in many colonists from New England. The Dutch on both continents were comparatively tolerant in religious matters. As the persecuted had, before this, fled to Holland, so now they found the Hudson more friendly to differing

opinions than the Puritan eastern coast. Captain John Underhill, after the Pequod war, brought several families with him from Connecticut, and settled them not far from the growing town on Manhattan.

What a town it was becoming ! New England has never been prone to belittle her own importance, and Richard had a boy's limited views of the progress there. During his voyage he reflected, not on the wonders he might be soon to see, but upon a possible meeting with Luke and Nan and what he should relate to their admiring ears of all that had occurred in the land they quitted for this which he was approaching and whereon he thought lightly in comparison.

"They will know," so his musings ran, "of the New Haven colony established by that great preacher Master Davenport of London and that good man Theophilus Eaton, who is governor of the plantation." He was to remain in office, by continuous elections, until his death about 1660.

"There is also the college founded at Newtown, or Cambridge, if they call the place for the mother university at home ; there was the convention at Hartford, of all the people along the Connecticut, and the constitution

agreeing to maintain the purity of the gospel, and, in civil affairs, to be governed by laws, whereon all who take the oath of allegiance to the commonwealth are allowed to vote. Master Williams deemeth that a step towards freedom of conscience, the separation of church and state." Again, Dick, of course, could not foresee that the constitution enacted by the Hartford convention was to remain in force for one hundred and fifty years.

"There is our printing press," the vain-glorious suggestions ran, "given four years since by generous friends in Holland. I shall show them my copy of the Psalms first printed on it — oh, mayhap they possess the same!"

He added the last clause to his thought, in crestfallen remembrance that the Hutchinson family had not been so long absent from New England as to have missed all signs of its progress towards civilization.

These signs multiplied as he sailed down the Sound. Clustering near the town of New Amsterdam, on Long Island, in New Jersey, upward along the Hudson, were scattered farms, although the life of New Netherland concentrated, for the most part, about the trading-posts. The villages were few and small.

But New Amsterdam ! What a stately town to rise from the very wilderness. Windmills spread their sails to catch the breeze, brick and frame houses thrust their sharp gables between the trees. The wooden church, erected, with the dominie's house, in the administration of Wouter Van Twiller, nephew-in-law to Patroon Van Rensselaer, had, during the five years since that time, been superseded by a stone building shingled with oak. Director General Kieft had also built the stone tavern, at the West India Company's expense, as well as set up distilleries and a buckskin factory upon Staten Island. Towards these a Dutch fellow-passenger pointed, with the pride Dick entertained in dwelling upon the glories of New England.

"What are those blackened ruins?" the boy inquired, indicating another part of the island recently laid waste. "That looks like grievous mischief."

"It was grievous mischief," said the man. "Patroon De Vries was the sufferer, which is the more deplorable, since he met the like loss, eleven years ago, at his station on the South River, and since, too, he is a man of peace and friend to the Indians."

“ Did the Indians burn his house ? ”

The Dutchman nodded.

“ Oh, these troubles with the natives ! ”
cried Dick. “ When shall we see the end of
them ? ”

Two centuries and a half have gone by
since he asked the question, and still no man
can give its answer.

CHAPTER X

THE PATROON'S CURSE

"How solemn every one is!" Dick exclaimed.

They had landed at the wharf. His new acquaintance, the Dutchman, was pointing out to him the sights of the town, where this impression, the anxious appearance of all faces, was the first that the newcomer received.

"We may well be troubled in mind," the other replied. "The director general has stirred up a fine strife with the savages." Whereupon he hastened to change the disagreeable subject.

"There is a vessel weighing anchor for the home voyage," he began, showing where it lay. "Would you like to go down to the pier and see its departure?"

Richard was to wait at the tavern for a messenger from Lady Deborah, who should conduct him to Gravesend. He was in no immediate haste, and said so.

“I would gladly witness the ship set sail,” he added.

The sight proved even more entertaining than they had anticipated. Upon the wharf a pompous, elegantly dressed personage was strutting up and down : some one of obvious consequence, judging from his bearing and from the glances of bystanders, — glances, Dick remarked, not always of obsequious admiration, but oftener of angry distrust.

“’T is Kieft himself,” observed the Dutchman under his breath.

At that Dick stared with all his eyes. He had heard much of Van Twiller’s successor, this violent, aggressive officer of the West India Company, who had angered the natives and quarreled with the dominie.

As they gazed upon the great man a belated passenger forced himself through the throng. He was striking towards the little boat which was to convey him to the ship, when he unintentionally jostled against the director general.

“Have a care, sir,” said Kieft in haughty admonition. “Look where you are going, if you will be so good.”

The offender had lifted his hat, anticipatory of an elaborate apology. At sound of the voice

and full sight of the figure before him, he assumed as proud a demeanor as that of the director general.

"Ah, De Vries," cried Kieft, in that moment of recognition. "I did not know you at first. You have fully determined, then, to return to Holland?"

"There is nothing else for me," was the answer. "I am a ruined man."

"That I regret," Kieft extended his hand. "These are sad times, my friend."

The patroon apparently held his head too high to notice the gesture. "Woe to him who brought sad times upon New Netherland," said he.

He took a step towards the waiting boat. His thrust had been too pointed, it had been overheard by too many passers-by: the director general could not afford to disregard it.

"Do you mean woe to me?" he demanded.

"I mean," De Vries raised his voice, "that the murders in which you have shed so much innocent blood will yet be avenged on your own head."

With that he coolly pushed aside the august form, stepped down into the boat, and, before Kieft could recover his equanimity

sufficiently to reply, the rowers had bent to their oars. De Vries was beyond further dispute.

Kieft looked pale and shrunken as he turned away. They were awe-stricken glances which met his. The words of the afflicted patroon had thrilled the hearts of his hearers.

"That man will never die in his bed," prophesied the Dutchman, watching the richly clad figure out of sight. "Sooner or later, the curse of De Vries will work his destruction."

Dick listened in silence.

They parted before the inn, where the lad spent most of the day in solitude that was not regretted, since he employed his time in a letter to Mistress Hutchinson, telling her of his arrival and proposing a visit to her family. He questioned the tavern folks, too, while he awaited Lady Deborah's man, so that, by the time the servant appeared, at nightfall, he was informed in all that had happened of late in this unhappy country. He saw why his hostess had insisted upon an escort for himself, and why the man chose broad daylight for their start. "The province is in a sad plight," Dick remarked, half interrogatively, as the horses jogged along side by side.

“All wrong.” Peter Lane shook his head. “All wrong. We have ill-treated the savages; that is the truth. Now we bear the consequences.”

Dick replied that he had heard of the unjust tribute demanded from the river Indians. He did not speak of further information, wishing to obtain all sides of the story.

“Ay, the Raritans called Kieft ‘a shabby fellow, to come and live on their lands, without being invited, and then want to take away their corn for nothing.’ Thereupon they were attacked, some killed, and their fields laid waste. A law against selling fire-arms to natives was broken, up the river, by traders, who found that the Mohawks and Iroquois would give them any amount of furs for guns, if so they might be ready to fight against the savages of Canada. The French have ever been free with weapons for the natives. Then the New Amsterdam traders sold them rum. What do you suppose” — Peter Lane turned on his horse, to see that he had Dick’s attention — “was the cause of all this bloodshed: cause sufficient, it may be, to drive us out of America, since we can neither hold our own in warfare against them, nor till our fields to supply our hunger?”

.

“What was it?” asked Dick, for he saw that his companion wished to enlighten him.

“A drunken savage’s beaver coat. ’T was stolen from him in an orgy at Hackensack. When he and friends from his tribe vengefully killed a harmless settler, Kieft called for his surrender. He would not be satisfied with the offer of two hundred fathoms of wampum instead, nor would he hearken to the prayer that we should not sell their young men strong drink. He ordered bloody onslaughts upon the natives at Pavonia and at Corlaer’s Hook. Who can marvel that the savages struck back, after their fashion, without mercy?”

So, discussing the situation, which, in truth, was grave, the travelers spent the time until the Gravesend house was reached.

It was a modest home, although superior to most of those which Dick had known in New England. The Dutch were fond of comfort: they were accustomed to it over seas, and they speedily introduced it into New Netherland, where immigrants gladly seized upon their methods and conveniences. Dick found a pleasant temporary abiding-place with Lady Moody. She had been driven from Salem on account of her Baptist views, to which Roger

Williams had been recently converted, while he admired the strong-minded woman and chose to send her this intelligence :

"He hath been told," so Richard delivered the word, "that Connecticut will pay no heed to the director general's appeal for fighting men. New Netherland must drive back the savages unaided."

"If it can be done," was the lady's calm response.

"At least she must look for no help from New England," the lad went on. "Master Williams was troubled at heart for your home, and other such lonely places. He would that I bring these news to you without delay."

"He could write the news," remarked Lady Moody, eying the speaker with a curious little smile.

"Ah, but then," Dick smiled, too, "I bring my two arms and my musket. A letter could not do that."

"It was thus I understood the secret of thy presence." She placed her hand upon the boy's shoulder. "I thank my new defender, yet I trust that no defense shall be needed."

"How many could you muster, if such need arose?"

“Perhaps forty fighting men. Let me think! Ay, bringing all together beneath this roof we should have two score.”

Dick felt that there was small hope of immunity from attack while on every hand the same tale was told of war to the knife between settler and native. Indeed Rensselaerwyck and the stations along the South River were the only part of New Netherland that escaped in this two years' contest. The late arrival learned that Captain John Underhill had raised a troop and was on the warpath. At its utmost the province could effect little. There were not two thousand men, women, and children within its borders, not more than three hundred warriors for this long continued strife.

By Lady Moody's orders no one, in those days, went outside the stockade on any pretense whatever. The cattle were pastured within this fence, and all the business of the community went on there under her keen oversight.

To what avail against such foes? One morning Dick was sent to feed the sheep in a pen to the south of the house. While occupied here he was roused by a sound that caused him to listen intently, to pause over his work.

"I don't like that," he said to himself.

The noise was repeated — twice. It was the report of a musket.

He gazed eagerly northward, whence the firing came, while he hurriedly finished the feeding of the sheep. He was under orders to do this: it was his first duty. But his hands trembled, scattering the food.

Henry Moody came running towards him, running south. His left arm hung limp at his side. Blood was trickling from it.

"The savages!" he called. "The savages have broken down the gate."

If this were truth there was nothing to do save take refuge in the house. Dick threw into the fold the pan he held, started towards Henry, and, racing at their utmost speed, they met upon the threshold of the outer door. It was of heavy oak. Both regarded it critically, in the second before it opened to their signal. Would it stand a siege?

Lady Moody was pacing the entrance hall. A fire upon the hearth was its only light, for every window had been darkened by massive shutters. The mistress of the house appeared to be its calmest inmate, as she walked up and down, giving out firearms, issuing commands, or encouraging her little force by her indom-

itable bravery. Dick noticed that she gave every white person — women and children, too — a weapon.

“We must all fight,” she said.

The lad’s post was at an upper window. He mounted the stairs, took his position, and waited for what should come. He did not doubt that, as Lady Moody had said, they must each take part in that day’s carnage. He would have his chance.

Henry and he divided the guardianship of this second floor. He bandaged the other’s wounded arm, listening to a rather incoherent tale of the attack upon the gate, while hearer and speaker strained their ears to catch every noise from below.

“They tore away the stockade,” his comrade declared. “They battered it down under a rain of tomahawks, and poured in like the waves of the sea. There was no withstanding them. There!” He raised his hand. “Hist! Was that the warwhoop?”

“I think it was.”

“Then they have reached the door. They have begun the same onset. And, Dick, they must be two hundred strong.”

CHAPTER XI

A GOLDEN ARROW

DICK at his post looked out by means of one loophole, while he thrust his musket through another bored in the oaken shutter for such purposes of observation and defense. He could see that the clearing immediately surrounding the house was swarming with Indians. Henry was right. There must be two hundred of them.

A step upon the stair startled him, although he did not move his body. He only shot a swift glance in that direction to see who came. Lady Moody moved up the steps with her wonted dignity, but a trifle hurried. Before her she pushed Mary, a native girl.

No one else in the household had fully approved the action of its mistress, some time before, in introducing this savage into her family. Lady Moody had her own notions. In this instance they included the civilization and conversion of the child, who rapidly acquired the customs of the place, stealing

about the house with a step like a spirit, noiselessly and obediently performing her daily tasks.

Lady Moody was bold without recklessness. She had kept a sharp scrutiny upon the girl since the beginning of these Indian disturbances. With the alarm that morning she called for Mary, and did not move thereafter unless the native was in her presence. Moreover, in their progress about the house, the maid was told to precede her mistress.

"Madam, I am faithful," she pleaded.

"In that case," was the response, "thou wilt not be harmed by any spying upon thee."

So they two came up the stairs together. The lady led her servant to the window where Richard knelt on guard. She motioned him to stand aside.

"Look," she said to Mary.

The girl peered out through the loophole. To those closely scanning her face it seemed as if a fleeting expression of distress, instantly suppressed, crossed her stolid features.

"Are they thy people?" Lady Deborah inquired.

She nodded sulkily. Mary had been taken from the Long Island Indians.

“Come hither,” said the lady.

They crossed the attic again. Henry’s station was directly over the main entrance. From this spot an unimaginable tumult arose. Shrieks of the wounded, yells of the savages mingled with the steady report of the white men’s muskets and the crash of tomahawks against the outer door. Another guarded the house proper. The Indians were striving to break down that of the vestibule.

To the youth’s horror Lady Moody proceeded to throw open the shutter where her son stood. She paid no heed to his expostulations. She said to Mary.

“Call out. Call thy loudest. Tell them thy name, at once, ere I show thee to them.”

Mary screamed lustily. Again and again through the din her shrill voice was raised in phrases of which Henry and Dick both comprehended the tenor. So far she was acting in entire good faith.

At length the attention of one Indian, then another, was attracted by this new sound. So soon as the first dusky face was raised towards the open window, Lady Moody, cautiously reconnoitring, thrust the girl into the open casement.

There was a movement of recognition. The

general attention was arrested. With suspended weapons the men stared up at the child. They saw, behind her dark and lowering features, the stern, set expression of her mistress. Lady Moody held a knife in her right hand.

"Tell them," she said in a loud voice, for she knew many must understand the tongue in which she spoke, "in the same moment in which the first red man crosseth yonder threshold, I drive this blade into thy heart."

Mary never flinched. She repeated the threat in tones that did not waver, and the listeners gave a cry of fury, as its significance was borne in upon them. Still Lady Moody stood at the window. On either side Henry and Dick had stationed themselves, muskets raised. Before her the Indian's slighter form acted as a partial screen. But she awaited the savages' decision in plain sight of them all.

They conferred together, gathering from various points to mutter, with heads thrust against one another, while ugly glances were cast at the woman who had announced her decision. They never doubted she would keep to it. No one could doubt who saw her.

After some moments of this a native ad-

vanced from among the rest. He threw back his head and looked upward. Lady Moody thought she recognized him as the person who had surrendered Mary to her.

"Is he thy father?" she asked.

"Yes."

Mary leaned out of the window. Involuntarily she seemed trying to approach him, to put a greater distance between herself and the whites. Yet her face and her father's face were as impassive as ever.

"We are about to depart," said he.

Mary's monotone translated this sentence.

"But you are to come with us," he added.

Once more a gleam — here it was like a flicker of joy — came and went in her eyes. She repeated the words in English.

"Dost thou wish to go, Mary?" inquired my lady.

The girl turned on her heel. "My name is no longer Mary," was her answer. "And these are my people. Yes, I would be with them."

Without a look for the kindly soul who had been her second mother, she stalked majestically to the stairs. Henry and Dick broke out, at this, in a breath: —

"We cannot trust them so far. When

they get possession of the girl they will renew the attack."

As he spoke Dick ran to the landing to detain the Indian. She hearkened to his speech with a curling lip.

"You speak like the treacherous English," said she, "who look for treachery in others. My people will keep their word."

"I believe they will," said the lady.

Mary's sensitive pride had been insulted by her position of hostage. Yet she looked gratefully towards the speaker.

"We must take no risks," urged young Moody.

Those below stairs, dazed by the little they understood of what was happening, began to call counsel and questionings. In all the confusion Lady Moody did not lose her head.

"Go to the window once again," she commanded Mary.

The girl obeyed.

"Tell them what we fear."

With a sneering smile she complied.

Lady Deborah knit her brows in thought.

"Tell them," she added at length, "that, on Friday, at high noon, I will send thee out to them. On my honor as a Christian, I pledge to do this thing."

“They will believe you,” said Mary curtly. “They will know that, if you send me, or do not send me, I shall come.”

“By Friday,” my lady whispered aside to her son, “I can get word to Fort Amsterdam, asking for help.”

Henry did not answer. He wondered whence the help could arise, since the fort was barely able to protect itself, and every day brought more and more fugitives to its shelter from all these outlying farms.

The colony was truly in extremity. The siege at Gravesend was raised, for both Indian and lady kept their promise. But it was widely debated whether the settlements along the Hudson must not be abandoned, as food, no less than adequate defense, was lacking. There could be no planting and no harvesting in those days.

At this juncture two important events occurred. Peter Stuyvesant, director of the West India Company's affairs at Curaçoa, sent one hundred and thirty Dutch soldiers to Manhattan. Roger Williams arrived there, about the same time, on his way to England. His good offices with the natives, backed by the reinforcement, turned the trembling scale. New Netherland was saved.

Dick did not see his guardian. All he heard increased his apprehension for the safety of the Hutchinson family. No sooner was the strain here relieved than he detailed his misgivings to Lady Moody, beseeching permission for a visit to his friends.

"I must see for myself how they fare," he said.

"It is no long journey," the lady answered. "I will give thee a horse and a guide — ay, Richard, thou shalt not travel alone — if it will set thy heart at rest. I, too, see cause for thee to hasten to the aid of Mistress Hutchinson."

Peter Lane was selected to act as leader of the little expedition. They made a quick trip. The disturbed state of the country through which they passed not only incited their fears and promoted the utmost speed, but also offered no inducement to linger.

"Another hour's ride," remarked the older youth, "then, if the last directions were trustworthy, we should see the chimney from yon hill. We must reach its summit by noon, and the house lieth somewhere along its further slope."

So they pushed bravely on.

The climb was through unbroken wilder-

ness. Midday came and found them far from the summit. It was as the sun began to sink that the weary horses, and their masters, tugging at the bridles, all alike paused, for breath and a long sigh of relief, upon the highest point.

"Let me look," Dick panted.

He leaned forward.

There was the clearing at the mountain's foot. There were the ploughed fields and the rough fences marking a stockade. But — there was no house.

Not a building rose between the trees. Blackened ruins, from which a soft curl of smoke went up, told where such a building had stood.

The travelers never knew how they reached the spot. Before nightfall they were examining all that was left of the settlers' home, going about, in a strange quiet, from one ghastly relic to another, gathering up the story of what had befallen Anne Hutchinson and her children. They found the mother's body, hacked and still bleeding. They unearthed Luke's corpse, and Samuel's, but there was no sign of Nan.

"Ay, here is a trace," Dick cried at last.

He had searched patiently, untiringly, rod

by rod, among those hideous surroundings. He was rewarded with a message he alone could read, left for the friend who had sent that word from Fort Amsterdam of his approach.

“She looked for me to come. See here!” he exclaimed.

Through the tender bark of a young birch-tree had been thrust, in passing, a token of Nan’s capture and forced flight. It was the golden arrow which had once glittered in the witch’s hair. The barb pointed northward.

“She hath been carried up the river,” said he.

CHAPTER XII

FOUND

“ALL trace is lost,” Richard cried in despair.

A fortnight had passed since his discovery of the massacre. Peter Lane said freely that the lad was crazy when Dick insisted upon following the trail of Nan’s abductors through the pathless forests along the river banks.

“’Tis but to leave thy bones to bleach in the wilderness,” Lane proclaimed uneasily. “I would go with thee, were it to any good. Yet what can one — or two — effect against a host of savages? Naught, save to die with the hapless maid.”

“Then I die,” was Dick’s answer. “I will not turn my back on Nan.”

After more hot words between them, Peter went on to Gravesend, while Richard resolutely set his face towards the up-river country. It was not altogether so desperate a case as the other would have it, in his distaste for the expedition. Those boyish roving days spent

among the Indian lodges of eastern Massachusetts, the early acquired knowledge of the woods, had been followed by intercourse with Roger Williams, who was the natives' unwavering friend, and accustomed his ward to life among them. Dick could find his way through the wilds; he could, as well as any pioneer in these perilous times, keep amicable relations with the savages he must encounter. He avoided such meetings, whenever it was practicable, and made his principal stops at the boweries lining the Hudson. Here he was entertained; sometimes he was instructed in regard to the movements of those whom he pursued. Occasionally he struck their trail. Oftener it was lost in that tedious search that stretched out, day after day, as if it would never end.

A white girl, accompanied by a band of Indians, had been seen at several points, always far in advance of the young seeker. He toiled on, however, undismayed, until, by canoe, in a trading yacht, or generally on foot, he had ascended the stream from its mouth to the post at Beverwyck.

This was the outskirts of civilization. The newly built town consisted of one house of some importance surrounded by a cluster of

huts. The inhabitants were all engaged in "truck" with the natives. From them Dick learned again of his object.

"Oh, yes, I know those savages," said a trader. "They are encamped not a day's journey to the westward. I passed the spot this morning. I can guide you thither, if you would have speech with them. But I saw no girl."

"Doubtless she was in hiding," Richard replied. "It is all I ask that you lead me where they are."

He was not in the least aware what he should do then. In some way, if he could find Anne Hutchinson, surely he could perform the last act of rescue. As it came to pass there was no need to formulate any scheme whatever.

With the wood-runner he paddled up the Mohawk in a birch canoe laden with the trinkets, the blankets and cloths which were used as a medium of exchange with the Indians. They found the camp where the trader had seen it, Dick's pulses beating fast as he marked the wavering smoke in the distance and whispered to himself :

"There — at last. There — at last."

The Dutchman drew his boat up on the beach. Dick sprang after him ashore. The

savages lounging about the clearing came forward to meet an old acquaintance. Dick scrambled up the bank.

"Where is the white girl?" he called.

"Wait, wait," his companion counseled in an aside. "That is not the way to learn."

Dick paid no heed to this wise advice. "Where is she?" he demanded again.

The Indian whom he addressed shook his shaven head.

"Gone," said he.

"Gone?"

"She disappeared, during the night, forty-eight hours ago."

Dick caught at a swaying tree branch, by which he steadied himself. The earth moved up and down before his swimming eyes. "How could she leave you without your knowledge?"

"Inquire of her guard," was the sullen response. "They swear they did not sleep. But—well, they have been well punished: yet we can get nothing more out of them."

With this the speaker picked up a string of leaden beads, becoming immediately absorbed in the notion of barter. He would listen no further to Dick.

"May I look for myself?" the boy asked, in desperation.

“Look as much as you like. You will find nothing.”

This proved to be true. He investigated every inch of ground about him. He entered the tiny lodge built for the captive, and saw the bed of beech leaves beside which a watchful squaw had lain. Outside the door a further guard was set. All alike, when Richard questioned them, declared they could not guess how the girl had been spirited away. The fact remained that it was done.

The lad pursued his despairing quest for a few days further, and then reluctantly turned southward. There was no more hope. Every trace of Nan was lost.

So he meditated moodily, one evening, while he busied himself about his preparations for supper, to be followed by another night in the woods. He was striking a light, bent over the pile of fagots, when a sound was brought to his ears that caused him to drop his flint and spring to his feet.

What was it?

The camp was made upon the brow of a hillock close to the river. From its pebbly shore had come a voice wafted to him in the evening air. It was not a native who spoke, nor a Dutchman. The words were English.

Dick flung himself full length on the ground so that he might peer over the slope. He was directly above the speaker. This is what he saw :

Another fire had been kindled about an ingenious oven made of stones. Beside the pile knelt a girl in the demure gown of a Puritan, her brown hair pushed back beneath her cap, her dark gown guiltless of adornment. Neat as was the arrangement of this dress it showed hard usage, long and severe travel. Her back was turned to Richard : it was long since they had met. Still he knew that Anne Hutchinson was found, although — his eyes wandered from her to stare at her companion. He could not keep them away.

The crouching figure, cleaning a fish by the water's edge, was clad in a rusty cassock, the bare head was tonsured. It was an incongruous sight here, in the heart of the woods, but this was not the cause of that horrid fascination that riveted Richard's gaze. The maiming, the disfigurement of that poor form and face were sickening, and still they drew back to them the morbid curiosity that longed to avoid the sight.

When we recall the pioneers who suffered much that this country might be laid open to

settlement, we should not forget those first Jesuit priests laboring among the Indians. They gave more than life for their faith. We have many brave souls among us, ready to go cheerfully to war, and fight on the field till death shall come. Who of us would endure as serenely such tortures as the savages delighted to inflict, tortures which are literally indescribable, unimaginable save to fiends? Isaac Jogues had suffered those barbarities many and many a time, when in captivity among the natives. It is a dramatic point in history that, just as the scene had closed, in Holland, on long years of strife between Papist and Dutchman, Dominie Megapolensis, at Beverwyck, should see the priest in bonds and persuade his stoutly Protestant parishioners to ransom the brave disseminator of Roman Catholic doctrines. Père Jogues was sent back to France. The Pope granted a special privilege to him: that of saying mass although a cripple. It was not for long. He returned to Canada, to his mission in those forests where he had already cut the emblem of the Crucifixion upon the trees. Here a horrible death awaited him, but not yet. He had encountered and carried off Nan Hutchinson, and thus was

brought about the picture which Dick now beheld.

"Come thou, my daughter," said the voice again. "While thou fillest the waterpot with water, I will tend the fire. The fish is prepared."

"Yes, father," Anne replied. "And I am an-hungered. We cannot sup too soon."

Richard swung himself over the shelving bank. He dropped at Nan's feet.

The girl gave a startled scream. Jogues flung aside his fish, springing upright in an attitude of defense.

"Anne, it is I: Dick Markham."

She ran to him, holding out both hands: "Oh, Richard, I knew that you would come."

"Is it Dicque?" asked Father Jogues.

He gave his distorted hand to the lad, and Richard kissed it reverently. This was the first time he had encountered one of the Roman Catholics against whom his party was so virulent. And this was his greeting.

There was considerable agitated speech between them, with Anne's explanations, Dick's story, or the priest's quiet word or two thrown into the steady stream of the others' talk. At last they sat down to their supper together.

“We journey towards Manhattoes,” Jogues explained. “It seemed unto me wise to avoid Fort Orange, since Anne’s captors were so close at hand. Nor is Rensselaerwyck strong enough to guard the child from repossession. I thought to take her straightway to the director general. He hath proved a good friend to me, hath this M. Kieft.”

“Your pardon, father,” Dick interposed, “if I offer another plan. The fort is crowded by settlers seeking refuge there. Why should not we take Nan to my Lady Deborah? She would receive her right kindly: that I know.”

The priest considered this proposition. Anne moved away towards the little bower of pine branches which Father Jogues had built for her sleeping-room.

“The poor child,” he murmured, following the departing figure with affectionate eyes. “She is without parent or brother. It were best, perchance, did we give her to the care of that good lady. Thy plan liketh me, my son.”

“And you?” Dick inquired.

“I shall return to my work.”

As the night shadows deepened a watch was set. Richard took the first hours, and, while he leaned upon his musket, his gaze was

again attracted by that misshapen figure prostrate in prayer beneath the trees. He recalled the blessing given to him and to Nan, before the latter bade them good-night. His senses reeled. He tried to realize what it all could mean that thus Papist, Hutchinsonian, and Presbyterian, they three, had prayed to one God that night.

Southward they marched on the morrow, and for days to come. At Fort Amsterdam the father parted from them, to go back, as he had said, to his work, and to his martyr's death at the end.

Lady Deborah was as hospitable as Dick had hoped.

"I knew she would be kind to me," Anne told him. "I was confident of my future, when Father Jogues laid his poor hand on my head, asking our Lord to take the orphan into especial care. The petitions of that good man will follow me."

CHAPTER XIII

CLOSED DOORS

DESPITE my lady's gracious manner, Anne could not be long content in her position as guest at Gravesend.

"There are too many dependents here," the girl confided to her first friend, Richard. "A mere stranger has no right to add to the number. Nor will I consent to do so."

"What would you, then?" he inquired.

"I know no better plan than this: I would go to my aunt in Maryland."

Dick scowled. "Thy father's sister Oliver?"

"The same. She of whom I have often told thee."

"But — Nan, she is a Papist!"

Anne held herself more erect. "She is mine only living kindred."

"I crave pardon. My lady," as their hostess entered the room, "here is this headstrong maid angered with me because her wish liketh me not. Yet would she to Master Oliver in Maryland."

Certainly Lady Deborah's careworn brow cleared at the information. "He is her uncle," she said, as if in argument.

"But, think you," Dick persisted, "can it be right for her to have dealings with a Papist?"

Anne gave an irresistible cry of pain.

"What is it?" my lady demanded. She looked as if she guessed the cause.

"Ah," said the girl. "What fate might have been mine, were Father Jogues of Dick's mind, when he found me in the forests near Fort Orange!"

"I know. It is all true," Richard acknowledged. "None hath more reason to soften his ignorant hate of that religion. And still, when I recall thine early training and my own, I cannot feel that thou shouldst be given over to the Roman faith, dear Nan."

My lady had the final word. "It must be good cause, in sooth, that divideth the members of one house. We have no right to set aside the bond of family. Anne knoweth I would gladly keep her with me. For all that, I shall not be the one to hold her from her uncle's care, since he biddeth her to come."

Master Oliver had been informed by his wife's niece of the massacre. It was his cor-

dial response which called forth the present discussion. Dick soon saw that its outcome was inevitable, and philosophically concluded to make the best of it.

At the bottom of his opposition lurked disappointment at further separation from his newly found friend. However, in any event, he could not remain with her much longer. During Roger Williams's absence Dick was needed at Providence, but, first, Lady Moody proposed that he escort Anne and one Dame Gray, who was to accompany her, to the Oliver plantation near St. Mary's.

The spirit of adventure was strong in them both. The boy and girl thoroughly enjoyed that southern voyage, charmed by the genial climate, the richer foliage, the more luxuriant vegetation, and, as they approached their destination, the brilliant colors of the birds, — the scarlet tanager, the gold and black of the oriole, and the bright blue jay.

The settlement of this portion of our country was begun in the early winter of 1633, under the charter granted to Lord Baltimore, and under the direction of that nobleman's brother, Leonard Calvert. They were Roman Catholics, as were most of the gentlemen of the colony. Since religious tolerance was the

most precious boon to their faith on English soil, they naturally extended it to all who came to them. Maryland, named for the queen of Charles I., was among the few liberal provinces in a cruelly bigoted age. On the whole, the natives were fairly treated, and, consequently, behaved well. The Emperor of Pascataway, with his wife and principal men, became converted by the Jesuit missionaries, receiving the rite of baptism. Yet in these latter days, even here, where no serious strife between Indian and pioneer ever occurred, there had been signs of a brooding discontent. It could not be sheer coincidence that, beginning with the Pequod war in New England, there ran up and down the Atlantic coast, during that decade, a struggle against the mastery of the white men. In Virginia such efforts seemed stamped out by the awful vengeance exacted for the Jamestown massacre of 1622. But the lesson must now be repeated. When the old chief Opechecanough, who had instigated that dreadful deed, made a similar demonstration of hostility, in which several villages were burned and some three hundred settlers killed, his outbreak was put down, and he was taken captive. He died in prison, of shame that his fallen estate should be

gazed at and commented on by his overpowering foe.

Maryland bore the lightest part in such enmity as this, coming, from time to time, to the surface. There were jealousies between her and Virginia, but, until lately, her prosperity had been untroubled. To the new arrivals from the turbulence of New Netherland she was another Eden. And they found the serpent was in the garden.

“A sloop saileth this evening to the very borders of Master Oliver’s plantation,” so Richard informed Dame Gray, on the morning after their arrival at St. Mary’s. “I think, an you are agreed, that ’t were best we take passage thither. From thence you may be transported to your brother’s home.”

The old nurse was to join this member of her family not far away. She agreed to the proposition for a further voyage, adding apprehensively : —

“The look of matters hereabouts liketh me not. The town seemeth in a state of siege, and all wait in dread of what Ingle’s men may do.”

The civil war was waging in England, but, to Dick, with many of his elders, there had been no especial interest excited thereby, in

the more immediate pressure of colonial affairs. The first fruits of that contest between king and Parliament here implicated the provinces. Richard Ingle, commander of a merchant ship, suddenly came out on the Commons' side, denounced King Charles, evaded the arrest of the loyal authorities, and, with some apparent warrant from Parliament, was harrying the coasts of Maryland.

Dick was boyishly eager to see more of this strange sort of warfare. He felt encumbered by the womenkind under his protection, finding duty peculiarly hard when it plainly called upon him to take the old woman and the young girl to a place of safety. He was not sufficiently acquainted with the peculiarities of the country to know that, in leaving the town, such as it was, behind him, he would go beyond reach of aid, in the isolation of the planters. For Maryland was like New Netherland in that the colony consisted rather of lonely manors than of strong village life and thus was open to attack.

And Richard set out upon the river journey with this fact for his solace in running away — he fancied — from danger: he could spend so much the more quiet time with Anne. The girl and he made acquaintance

from the beginning, meeting after the separation that divided their childish friendship from the present. There was a novel fascination in their intercourse, a delight which was even more intense than his wish to see come to pass at St. Mary's all that was brooding over the place.

There was a stir on board the sloop, too, which might betoken many things, but spoke most plainly of uneasiness. The captain kept a never-ceasing watch upon the banks.

"Do you fear Ingle's men?" Dick asked, this being the most apparent cause for apprehension.

"Oh, no," was the hasty rejoinder. "I am afraid of nothing. Yet — I don't think we shall tarry at Master Oliver's wharf. I go on without delay. So, if you and your party can be ready to land in the small boat when the plantation is reached, it will oblige me."

Richard was rather surprised at this decision. He felt it to be newly reached, since he understood Francis Oliver to be a man of prominence, no less than wealth, and his fine home a regular landing place for trading vessels such as these.

As, however, the skipper was obviously not in a communicative mood, there was no use

in questioning the change of plan. He could only follow directions, warn the dame and Anne, and help them to gather together their luggage. The old woman proved inefficient, timid, and fretful in these surroundings. She had insisted upon the journey, grateful for company in the quest of her brother. Like herself he was a Protestant, as were many of the laborers in Maryland. Since Goody Gray set foot upon Southern soil her alarm at what Ingle the Independent, or Calvert the Roman Catholic, might effect to her personal injury had been constant and ridiculous. Anne was so far from receiving care from her hands that she was obliged to soothe and tend Dame Gray as if she had been in years the child she appeared.

“There is the house yonder,” one of the men pointed out to Dick. “All these fields along the river, back as far as the eye can reach, belong to Master Oliver. He is one of our largest landowners.”

Anne stood at Richard's side, while both gazed curiously upon what was to be her future home. The wide green lawns, the vine-wreathed trees, the masses of fragrant bloom appealed to their senses more directly than the rich growth in the cleared spaces,

the tokens of successful cultivation upon that fertile soil.

The wide, low house, substantial, even fine in its homely fashion, came slowly into sight. But now they could not pause to study its appearance, for the boat was ready at the side. They must collect their belongings within it, part from their fellow-passengers, and reëmbark for the wharf.

Even in that rapid passage, between the vessel anchored in midstream and the narrow wooden pier stretching out from the river-slope Dick felt vaguely that all was not right. When they were set ashore and had seen the sloop sail away again, leisure came to analyze his sensations. He looked about him deliberately.

“It is very still,” said Dame Gray.

That was it. Not a sound of life broke the hush of the summer afternoon. Where were the many men who must occupy such a spot; where were the workers, the master and his family?

For the house, too, was dark.

Anne stared at its shuttered windows and barred door. “Is there no one within, think you?” she faltered.

Dick ran up the grassy path. He crossed

the porch and lifted the ponderous knocker. It fell with a metallic clang. Once more it fell, and once more.

Still there was no response, still no faintest sign of human life except for themselves. The plantation was deserted.

CHAPTER XIV

INGLE'S MEN

IT was some time before Richard would agree that they were come to an empty house. He endeavored to cheer the spirits of his companions — the dame was on the verge of weeping — while he went from door to window, seeking any means of ingress. Everywhere he was met by the same tightly closed barriers.

“What is to be done?” Nan asked.

He had returned disconsolately to the front of the house. Here ran a long gallery upon whose steps the others had piled their luggage.

“The place is assuredly abandoned,” Dick said slowly, removing his broad hat to wipe the perspiration from his forehead. “I don’t know what to do. There,” he pointed to the sunny river where a white sail gleamed in the distance, “we have lost the sloop, with no sign of another house to any point of the compass.”

"The shipmen said," Dame Gray broke in, "that the nearest plantation was five miles to the westward."

"I remember. You could not walk so far. Shall I break in a shutter, Anne, and raise the window? We could thus enter the house, where must be shelter and might be food. May I do it? I feel as if, after a fashion, it were thy home. Thou standest for thine uncle." He smiled, with a sense that he must encourage these woe-begone souls who turned to him for strength. "Dost thou bid us welcome, Anne?"

The girl's courage rose to meet the demand of this emergency. "Ay," she answered, smiling too. "I bid thee welcome. Do thou obtain entrance after any manner whatever."

Dick, accordingly, went to work at the nearest shutter, where his knife soon dislodged a hinge. He tore back the oak slab, Anne assisting him so far as she could, and Goody Gray sitting on the steps, her head supported by her hands, her doleful voice running on in a monotonous prophecy of evil.

"It may be," she thus suggested, "that the plague hath seized a member of the family, and the others have fled before it. Or Ingle descended upon the plantation, throw-

ing all into confusion. Howe'er it standeth, 't is sure a risk to us in lingering here."

Dick and Anne exchanged meaning glances. She moved nearer, under pretense of handing him the hatchet.

"Dost believe 't was fear of the plague?" she whispered.

Dick shook his head.

"Everything is orderly, and was arranged without pressure of time," he answered, waving his hand to indicate the general condition of the place. "For myself, I think they have taken refuge in the woods at the news of Ingle's approach."

Nan grew very white. "And he may still come down upon us?"

"Nay nay, be not afraid. He may have been and gone again."

Anne did not answer this palpable effort to lull her terrors. The very peacefulness of all about them showed that no marauder had visited here. If Ingle were in the neighborhood, he had not yet swooped down upon Master Oliver's home.

But no good could arise from peering into the future. The wise course was to utilize their present as best they might. So, after Dick had raised the window and, stepping

inside the immense living-room, managed to unbolt the door, they all entered the house, and Nan, bustling to the hearth, raked up the embers.

"The family are not long departed," she observed, seeing that a spark of fire lingered in the ashes. Soon she had a bright flame dancing up the chimney.

"When we have eaten a good supper," Dick remarked, "we will feel in better heart to meet whatsoever is at hand." So he rummaged in a cupboard, brought forth meat and bread, set the mournful old nurse down in an armchair at the table, and fell to, himself, upon the food.

He ate hurriedly, for he was secretly impatient. Every moment counted. The skipper's haste and apparent alarm when he set them ashore, coupled with what he had found here, assured him that the dreaded Ingle drew near. It was notorious that Master Oliver was a King's man. The poor Papists, both in England and in America, were publicly repudiated by Charles's Churchmen, no less than the Independents and Presbyterians of the Commons' party. Yet, uninvited, they had flocked around the Stuart standard, which they upheld on the English battlefield. In

Maryland they were striving to put down the Parliamentary forces, in the mutual contention for mastery.

"A rich royalist cannot escape," Dick thought.

He must prepare what he could in the way of defense, such poor defense as was his best, and, before all else, he must ransack the house to see what vantage ground he possessed, no less than to discover any trace of the absent owners. He must take nothing for granted. It might be that his theory was incorrect, some other cause having driven away the Olivers.

Anne kept her gaze upon his face, while she played with the food she had no appetite to eat. She said nothing during the meal, nor when, having finished it, they cleared away the fragments. She waited until the broken, unhappy old woman dozed, from utter fatigue, from hunger satisfied, and the comfortable heat, in her great chair on the hearth. Then the girl plucked Richard by the sleeve.

"Thou art about to search the house?"

"Yes."

"May I go with thee?"

Dick took her hands in both his.

"We may find some horrid sight, Nan. If I shall have guessed amiss, the cause for this exodus might lie in the rooms above."

She shuddered, and her fingers closed about his clasp. But her voice was steady.

"I will go with thee."

"That is a brave girl! Come, then."

All had been carefully secured after their entrance. They cast a last comprehensive glance about the apartment, from the snoring figure by the fireside to the closed windows and door. Dick caught a candle from the table, and handed it to Anne. He drew his own knife for her, and examined his gun.

"Now we are both armed," he exclaimed. "Hold the light so that it may fall over my shoulder. I must have both hands free. And follow close behind me. Come."

He took a step towards an inner door. Anne would have passed him, not comprehending his meaning. He thrust her gently back.

"May I not lead thee with the light?"

"Nay, I must lead."

She saw then that his fear of what they might encounter in that silent house was greater even than hers. And yet her knees were shaking, the hand that grasped the

taper trembled so that it gave a dubious illumination.

They moved on through the doorway.

The kitchen, as in so many Southern houses, was a building apart from the main structure. The great room still occupied by Dame Gray was the only one below stairs. A flight of steep narrow steps opened, by a hallway, out of this. The two stole up them, their foot-falls sounding with a harsh distinctness, strive as they might to move softly.

At the stairway's head a landing gave on a long passage which ran from back to front of the house. Four doors opened from it. Dick advanced, and seized the latch of the first.

It was locked.

Followed closely by Anne, he went on to the next. This opened readily, disclosing a small room, simply furnished with bed, stand, and chair. On a row of pegs hung articles of clothing. There was no closet and no place of concealment within the four walls. They passed on to the third door, and the fourth. Each showed a sleeping-chamber, the counterpart of the second. They went back to that which was fastened.

"I must break this in," Dick said quietly.

"I will hold thy musket," was Anne's

only answer. She reached out her free hand for it.

As Dick gave the weapon to her their eyes met. Hers sank before the praise she read.

"Thou brave girl," he murmured once more.

Shifting the hatchet to his right hand, he attacked the lock.

Very shortly it trembled in his grasp. He set his shoulder against the panels, forcing them suddenly back so that he plunged head-long into the darkness beyond. Anne, her lips pale and her fingers shaking, sped after him, lifting the candle aloft. He pushed her hurriedly where his broad shoulders shielded her, and they stared inquisitively about them.

It was another sleeping-room, but better furnished than the rest, with mahogany bedstead and chairs and table, besides the tall-boy which Dick at once concluded held valuable papers. He shook the locked drawers and told Nan to notice that the contents did not rattle.

"'Tis not coin nor plate that they hold," said he. "Doubtless the key here and at the door were turned to guard thine uncle's secrets. There is naught more to learn. Shall we go back to Goody Gray?"

As they retraced their steps he confessed

how heavy a load had been lifted from his spirit.

"I feared the dame's notion of a plague-stricken spot more than all else," he said, "for against that no caution could avail. But we met no hint of such affliction. I return to the thought of Ingle's men."

"And there they are."

It was Anne's soft voice just breathing the words into his ear.

"Where?"

His tone was sharp and quick. The gun he clutched clattered noisily on the stair.

"My hearing must be sharper than thine, Dick. Canst not mark the grating of a boat drawn up against the wharf?"

He listened intently in vain.

"I mark naught."

"Nor — now, hearken! — the muffled tread of men, moving over the grass? They are sly, but their guns will rattle, as thine doth, Dick. And they approach the house."

He made a flying leap to the foot of the stairs. He flung the door open, springing past the awakening old woman, rubbing her horn spectacles, in the depths of the armchair. She felt feebly out for him, but he paid no heed.

“What is wrong — again?” she wailed.

Anne hastened to her side. Dick had already reached the window.

He was too late. The loosened shutter fell back from the outside. The wealthy planter had imported glass for use in his new house. Through its panes a figure was clearly shown. A face peered in at them.

CHAPTER XV

CONFUSION TO CHARLES STUART

“FIRE!” called Anne Hutchinson.

She was as reckless as most of her sex, who are not apt to consider consequences until late in the action. On the other hand, Dick had learned the lesson his father sought to teach: the difference between foolhardiness and courage. He would not begin hostilities without making sure those outside were enemies. It might even be that they were Francis Oliver’s party returned. In that case he was the intruder. Should they prove the marauders he thought them, he had to make up his mind what part to play, under another’s roof, in defense of another’s home.

He advanced to the window, determined to parley.

“Open, in the name of Parliament,” called a voice.

Then they were Ingle’s men.

Dick could see, behind the speaker, a dozen figures crowding the gallery. He understood

that resistance was futile. It would only result in injury to Master Oliver's house. He turned from the casement.

Anne was regarding him curiously as she knelt by the dame's armchair.

"What shalt thou do?" she asked.

"I shall open the door."

The girl leaped to her feet, staring at him in dismayed bewilderment.

"Oh, Richard, thou wilt never surrender without a struggle? I thought thou wert," she faltered over the bitter speech, "of another sort than that."

Dick's brown cheeks burned. "Thou dost not comprehend," he answered gently. "'T is the best I can do. Afterwards we will make what terms we may."

"Open the door," the impatient voice demanded again.

Followed by Anne's reproachful eyes, that pierced his heart, the lad resolutely crossed the room and drew the bolt. A tall, black-browed fellow strode into their presence. His lowering face was shaded by a peaked hat. He held his musket cocked. At his elbow was a half score of others no more engaging in appearance than himself.

"Ha, Master Oliver," he said, staring all about him. "You are alone, I see."

He counted the women as nothing.

Dick threw a warning glance towards Anne. Goody Gray was too terrified to notice what the man had said. Richard meant to profit by the natural blunder, if there were any good to be gleaned from the whole miserable affair. Grasping the situation in an instant, he perceived that the position of son of the house (Francis Oliver's eldest boy was about his age) might assist them somewhat, and, should it prove a detriment, he could, at any moment, reveal his identity.

"I am alone," he said coldly, "save for these friends here."

"Where is your father?"

Ingle flung himself into a chair. He did not remove his hat nor did his clutch relax upon his gun, but his attitude was that of one completely exhausted, — too tired for further fighting, Dick hoped, as he watched him and his followers. The others threw themselves upon the floor.

"My father is dead."

Ingle started upright. "Is it so? How long since?"

"Since — some time."

Dick was treading slippery ground. Any one of these visitors might well have seen or

heard of Francis Oliver, alive and well, but lately. However, the answer passed. Ingle was more closely interested in the affairs of the present.

“And have all fled, save you and these women?” he inquired.

“Yes.”

Dame Gray saw the indifferent wave of the hand towards herself. One of the hardest lessons to learn is that of our unimportance. She supposed herself to be in peril, that the moment had come to interfere. Stumbling clumsily to an upright posture, she tottered forward.

“You are Master Ingle?” she asked.

The man bowed, with a smile at the crone, her cap awry, her white hair disheveled, her withered features ashen from fright. It was an amusing picture to him and his comrades.

“Good sir,” exclaimed the dame, prostrating herself before him. “Have mercy on me. I am no Cavalier.”

Ingle burst into a laugh, in which his followers joined.

“I guessed as much,” was his mocking response.

In one motion Dick and Anne sprang to raise the poor creature to her feet. Neither

spoke, and yet a flush of shame crossed the marauder's face.

He broke out quickly, to cover his unwonted confusion. "How cometh a Parliamentary here in a Papist house?"

"She is but now arrived from New Netherland," Dick explained, "as companion to Master Oliver's niece, this maiden, one Mistress Anne Hutchinson."

Ingle regarded the girl more closely. She bore his scrutiny with a cold scorn. "So thou art Anne Hutchinson," he said slowly. "But surely thou art too young and fair to be the Witch of the Conighticute?"

Anne grew ghastly white. Dick's eyes blazed, and he placed one hand meaningly upon his sword.

"The damsel," he cried, "is a member of this household. She hath a claim to its protection. Were it not so, because she is a woman, and I am a man, I should challenge any who insults her mother's memory."

Once more Ingle moved restlessly in his seat. "Well crowed, my gallant young cockerel," he sneered, "though thou art o'er boastful to call thyself a man, and thy sword," with a contemptuous smile in its direction, "hath scarcely done work to fit it in matching

mine. Howe'er that be, we shall not quarrel now. Do thou and the child serve us with food before aught else is said or done."

"An you will be so good, Mistress Anne," Richard addressed her ceremoniously, "we will set what the larder holds before these guests of ours."

Dame Gray had relapsed into the armchair, where she furtively heeded every gesture of the intruders. The lad and lass moved back and forth, covering the table with such dishes as came first to hand. The men looked on in silence.

When all was prepared they gathered around the board, examining and criticising their fare, helping themselves to what pleased their fancy, but never relaxing a steady watch over their unwilling entertainers. The atmosphere of the house was decidedly unfriendly. They were on their guard against treachery or open hostility.

These men were living on the fat of the land dealt out grudgingly by the planters. Their taste, consequently, was fastidious. When it had been satisfied Ingle stood up, assuming a brisk manner of pressing business.

"Now, Master Oliver," quoth he, "will

you be so good as to bring out your gold and your plate?"

Richard expected this demand. His answer was ready. "Sir," he said, looking the leader steadily in the eyes, "I know not where there is a pennypiece nor an ounce of plate in the house."

Anne, standing behind him, listening eagerly, clapped her hands softly together. The speech was literally true. Their own small means were in a wallet which Richard, while he spoke, had drawn from his breast, laying it upon the table between himself and Ingle.

"Except this purse," he added.

Its production satisfied the robber as to his honesty. Yet they must make assurance more than sure, and for this, also, Richard was prepared.

"We will search the house," Ingle directed his men.

They were about to leave the room when Dick crossed over to Ingle, striding, candle in hand, towards the stairs.

"I shall go with you," said he.

Ingle exchanged a meaning grin with one of his band.

"And put us off the scent, I suppose, if it

be possible," was his comment. But he made no further objection.

As the door closed behind them, Anne stooped over the old nurse. Tears were running down her cheeks.

"I judged Dick wrongfully, dame," she whispered. "For a moment I thought his courage wavered. I might have known."

Meanwhile, overhead, the men went thoroughly through the rooms. They found, as the boy and girl had done, nothing save the chest of drawers to reward their investigation.

Ingle paused before this piece of furniture. Richard had been dreading the moment. He broke out imploringly.

"Spare whatsoever it holds," he begged. "On mine honor, I believe 'tis naught save family letters. Shake the drawers! Listen! You can see for yourself that there is nothing heavy there. Sir, I am bound to protect this house. I pray you spare its private papers to me. I ask it as a fellow Puritan."

"A fellow Puritan?" repeated a dozen voices.

"Art not young Oliver?" was Ingle's perplexed query.

"I am Richard Markham, ward to Roger Williams, of Providence. This roof hath afforded shelter to me. Let me not see it dishonored while I remain in charge."

"And yet I do not understand," Ingle persisted, knitting his heavy brows over the problem. "How cam'st thou here? Tell me the whole story."

Richard hurriedly complied. "Mistress Hutchinson and the dame will confirm what I say," he added. "Ask them."

"I will," was Ingle's quiet assurance.

He led the way to the stairs, bidding the others follow. They joined the waiting pair in the room below.

"Who is this fellow?" Ingle demanded peremptorily, first of Goody Gray.

"Richard Markham, sir," she gasped.

"Is that true?" addressing Anne.

"Oh, Dick," she burst into tears. "I must speak sooth, must I not? Ay, Master Ingle, 't is true."

Her manner was perfectly convincing, yet the robber still hesitated. He could not credit the presence of Williams's ward in a Roman Catholic household.

"Then," he drawled, eying Dick and pulling a liquor flask from his doublet, "thou art

no Malignant, young Markham. Here, take this. Drink confusion to Charles Stuart."

For a second Richard held the silver bottle between his fingers. He hesitated, bit his lip, glanced towards Anne, and away again. He set the flask on the mantel-shelf.

"I cannot do that," he said.

CHAPTER XVI

A MAGIC NAME

EVERY sword flashed from its scabbard. If Dick had spoken blusteringly his refusal might not have seemed so offensive as that cool deliberation.

"I thought as much," Ingle cried in triumph. "Despite thy denial, thou art, at heart, a Papist."

"No Papist, and no Malignant. Only an independent fellow-being, who cannot allow another to command whom he shall curse, nor whom he shall bless."

"That is mere obstinacy."

"Mere self-respect," was Richard's cold rejoinder.

He did not look towards Anne, nor did she speak. Still he was aware that she approved this act of his. The knowledge gave him strength.

Ingle shrugged his shoulders.

"Enough of this trifling," he blustered. "I have played the fool too long with you

and your scruples. I have trusted what you said. Henceforth I shall judge by sight, not hearing. Empty your pockets."

"I gave you all my money, and all that belonged to these women here."

"So you told me. Allow me to see for myself."

Richard pulled his several pockets wrong-side out.

"Aid him, Jekyll," was Ingle's instruction.

One of the men stepped, smiling, from his place in the background. Evidently nothing loath, he jerked Dick into the firelight.

"Leave the room," Ingle added, at this juncture, to the trembling women.

Anne assisted Goodwife Gray to stand. She did not address Richard, but, as the two passed Ingle, —

"Gentle sir," she pleaded, gazing up at him with imploring eyes, "you will not harm poor Dick?"

This was too much for one listener. He saw the amusement of Ingle's men. Two or three laughed outright.

"Nan, thou shalt not beg for me!" he cried.

The chief of this band of bullies, pleased to display his power, frowned upon the agitated girl's appeal.

“He must run his chance,” he decided. “I have given him over to friend Jekyll’s hands, and Jekyll is not exactly a lady’s man. What say’st, George? Shalt thou be o’er gentle with the youth who would not drink with us?”

Her fingers on the latch, Anne waited to hear the answer. Dame Gray had hurried percipitately up the stairs. This pretty, pale young girl was alone in the group of men.

Jekyll’s ugly features lighted in a new resolve. Here was an opportunity to refine the torture of his captive, already restive under his firm grasp.

“If the maid would give me a kiss” — he began.

The sentence did not end. Dick raised his free hand and struck a fearful blow across the smirking mouth.

“Anne, leave the room,” he thundered.

The door opened and closed. She was gone. He drew a breath of relief, even in the tumult he had created. Jekyll was tending his bleeding lips, but ready helpers had flown to his side. Richard was rudely pulled hither and thither, while his arms were bound.

"I fancy," said Ingle, with his evil smile, "that twelve men can work their will in this house, young master, even if thou art not agreed."

"That may be," was the contemptuous retort. "'Tis not the favorite method of Englishmen — to fight twelve to one. Yet it may serve."

After all, bravery instinctively appeals to the meanest soul. Ingle recognized that Dick showed desperate courage, and writhed under this last jibe.

He sought to give a lawful touch to the adventure.

"In the name of Parliament," said he, "search, and seize all you shall find."

Dick was now distressed by another dread. What if they should discover the packet he wore about his neck? What if they should take away his father's letter?

The blows they had dealt were nothing. Any ill usage would be nothing, so long as Anne and Dame Gray were safe and the parcel was undisturbed.

They tore the doublet from his throat, pulling away the shirt. He felt Jekyll's huge hand close upon that cord. He gave a groan.

All was lost.

Sometimes we have that thought at the very moment when all is won.

"What is this?" chuckled the Roundhead, tugging at the string. He pulled the case to light.

"Aha, treasure trove," said he. "Master Ingle, 't is as you suspected. The fellow lied to you. Here is his choicest possession."

"I did not lie," Dick protested indignantly. "Nor would I, to save far more than what that holdeth. Yet, Master Ingle, your tool here speaketh truth: it is my choicest possession. I ask you leave but this to me."

The leader advanced, his greedy eyes full of curiosity.

"What doth it contain?"

"Naught more than a letter given me by my father when he was dying."

Ingle's countenance fell. "A letter for whom?" he growled, keenly disappointed.

"I do not know the man. He must have been a friend, for I was bade to serve him, after any fashion, to all honorable ends."

Although Jekyll was busy about his person, Dick had not deigned one glance at the ruffian since he smote him full on the leering mouth. Nothing is so unendurable as to be despised. Jekyll's constant endeavor was to gain notice,

no matter how angry, for himself. He now undid the wrapper, examining the contents.

"It is a letter," he observed, as if surprised to find Richard's claim confirmed, "and unsealed. Hast read it, sirrah?"

The proud high look of his victim went past him and fell on Richard Ingle. There was no reply.

"You heard what was said to you," called the chief sharply. "Answer him. Or," something in Dick's eyes compelled him to go on, "you may answer me if you choose."

"Sir, you would not ask the question."

"Prithee, why not?"

All listened to hear Dick's answer.

"Between gentlemen," he hinted, "'t is not the custom to inquire hath one read a letter written to another man."

It was vexatious to Richard Ingle that he should abstain from scrutiny of either the lad's correspondence or that locked in the cabinet above-stairs. Yet he hugged to himself a long-surrendered bliss when he was saluted as superior to such meanness. His men felt diverted, or angered, according to their natures, while George Jekyll was transported with rage at the pompous air their leader assumed, the proud carriage of his head as he responded:—

"You are right, Master Markham. 'T would never enter my mind to wonder if you had peeped into what you carry there. Place it in its wrappings, George."

The man obeyed sullenly enough. He stuffed the folded sheet into the silken kerchief so clumsily that it fell from his clasp to the ground.

Dick could not restore it. His arms were too firmly secured. He must bear, with what patience he possessed, to see Jekyll stoop and fumble for it on the hearth. It lay, face upward, in the firelight. The man looked carelessly, then more intently, at the cover. He clutched at the letter, holding it close to his bleared eyes.

"What seest thou?" Ingle asked.

He was taking a draught of wine from the decanter upon the table. He set his cup down, untasted, to put the question. Most of his followers echoed it.

Without a word Jekyll crossed to his master, handing him the letter. His rough forefinger pointed meaningly at the address.

Ingle read the line or two attentively: read them more than once. Then he rose and walked towards Dick who stood passively awaiting the next move. Did all this forebode

good or ill to him? He fancied that it would be ill.

"This letter is for William Goffe," said Ingle.

"I know."

"General William Goffe, of the Parliamentary army."

"That I did not know." Dick seized the scrap of information with avidity.

"And he was your father's friend, the man whom you were to serve as you had opportunity?"

"He was the man I meant."

Ingle drew his sword. He made a rapid slash at the bandage binding Richard's arms.

"You are a free man," he exclaimed. "Never shall it be said that I did harm to any friend of William Goffe."

He swept a comprehensive glance about him, a glance that held the attention of every one in his dozen men.

"We take our departure, forthwith," he announced, "and we go empty-handed. This gentleman is responsible for Master Oliver's estate. No hurt shall fall upon it while he hath it in charge."

A murmur of dissent arose. Ingle quelled it by some whispered speech apart. Even

Jekyll seemed convinced by this argument, whatever it might be. He strode over to Richard, still regarding them, from the hearthstone, in his attitude of latent strength. The marauder reached out the wallet.

"Then this is thine once more," snarled Jekyll.

"I thank you," Dick forced himself to say. He pitied the abased pride of the other.

"'T is thy turn now," Jekyll continued, in an ugly undertone. "Thy friend at court hath won this respite for thee. But," he laid his palm on Richard's breast, "we may meet again one day."

Dick's lip curled. "Once is enough," he replied in the same low key. "Yet, should unluck bring me sight of thine ill-favored visage again, good Master Jekyll, why — my right hand is at thy service, remember."

He slightly moved the bruised fingers, letting his glance fall for an instant upon the other's swollen lips.

"And mine at yours."

Jekyll bowed with uncouth dignity. Richard returned the salute. Then Ingle advanced, and they two exchanged the like courtesy, with some true feeling this time.

"An thou wouldst find General Goffe,"

he said, "seek him in Manchester. 'Twas there I heard last of his doings."

Dick thanked him cordially. They shook hands.

"Come, men," said Richard Ingle.

CHAPTER XVII

“WHO’S THERE?”

THE last echo of departing footsteps died away into the night. Dick went to the stairway door and threw it open.

“Anne, where art thou?” he called. “They are gone.”

A more immediate reply than he looked for was his. The girl and the nurse sat huddled together at the head of the steps. Anne flew down to meet him. The dame, dazed and half asleep, did not stir.

“I thought you safe bolted in one of the upper rooms,” Richard observed, annoyed to learn of this hazardous lingering. Anne was abashed at this greeting.

“I could not go quite away,” she hesitated. “I must know what they would do to thee.”

He caught her hands in his. “Then you care what comes to me, Nan, albeit you despised me when I bade them enter the house.”

She flushed hotly, striving to pull away from his hold. "'T was silly of me to judge you then. I know better now. I should have known better from the first: that whatsoever you do is sure to be right and wise."

"And there thy charity is too great. As if I could deserve such praise! But, at least, we are friends again, are we not? And Ingle hath departed."

"Tell me how he went."

Dame Gray descended the stairs to hear this story. Both were impressed by the influence Richard's letter had exerted. Both betrayed considerable curiosity concerning it.

"You know all I know of the matter," he told them.

"Now naught remaineth," Dick continued, dismissing the subject, "save for us to secure a long night's sleep after our hard day. Anne, wilt thou conduct the goodwife above-stairs? I shall make me a bed here by the fire. And so good even to you."

After they had left him he folded his cloak into a comfortable pallet, lay down before the hearth, and, so exhausted was he by all that had happened in the past twenty-four hours, was soon in the world of dreams.

He seemed still wandering there when a faint consciousness came to him of soft steps not far away. There was a stealthy tread along the porch, a cautious hand was laid upon the shutter. It was all too dimly defined to break the thread of his slumbers. Not till the blind swung back and some one peered in at him did the prone figure by the dying fire start up and Richard cry :—

"Who 's there?"

A key was turned from without. Into his presence strode a tall, broad-shouldered, richly appareled man. A handsome young cavalier followed him.

Dick greeted them with level gun. "By what right enter ye this house?" he fiercely demanded.

The elder gave a short laugh: "By right of ownership," he said coolly. "I am not wont to beg the right to cross my threshold, sir. And who may you be here in possession?"

They were Francis Oliver and his son. From a hiding-place not far distant these two had witnessed the departure of Ingle's men up the river. They concluded to reconnoitre, leaving the others in safety while they spied out the land to see if it were safe to return home.

Anne received a hearty welcome from her kinsfolk, and her companions were scarcely less hospitably received. Goody Gray went to her brother so soon as Ingle's final leave-taking from this part of the country rendered its inhabitants free to travel. Dick did not feel disposed to linger even in so happy an abiding spot with one for whom he cared as, he was finding now in their daily intercourse, he had come to care for Anne.

He discussed his plans with Master Oliver, who gave a friendly hearing, but only partial sympathy. Afterwards the lad sought Nan one evening, in her stroll up and down the grassy path between the house and the water.

He fell into step beside her, precipitating his subject.

"I am to return forthwith to Providence," said he. "An Master Williams is come and giveth his consent, Nan, I mean then to take ship for England."

"Oh, Richard! But not at once? Thou sayest — forthwith!"

"And why not? I have learned where William Goffe is to be found. Surely the next step, which should not long delay, is to search for him. Now that the way is clear

before me, I must keep that pledge to my father."

He forgot in his earnestness that this purpose had not been to Anne a daily thought for years. Naturally she could scarcely enter into his joy at the fulfillment of old hopes.

The girl looked very forlorn, Dick thought. Or was it his fancy that made a mournful picture of the slow-pacing figure, head bent, fingers listlessly interlaced, the sad twilight over all?

"England is so far away," she murmured.

"So is Providence," he practically observed. "If I may not be with thee, 'tis little I care how many miles lie between us."

The pink color crept back to Anne's cheeks.

"'Tis not thus with me," she insisted. "We should not see each other — that is true — wert thou to return to Master Williams. And I looked for thee to leave me. But the Old World and the New seem as widely separated as the next world and this. 'Tis somewhat as if thou wert about to die."

In the dusk he drew closer and he saw that she passed one hand across her eyes. Dick caught her, impulsively, in his arms.

"Sweetheart," he said, "I told thine

uncle but now how dear I held thee. Nay, do not tremble thus : thou knowest not how dear thou art ! He would not listen. He said we were mere boy and girl : that I was too young to say such words ; thou wert too young to hear them. The uttermost to which he would consent was this : When we both are older and — he will have it — know our own mind, I may come back to thee. Then shalt thou have my question and I thine answer. What sayest thou to this device, love ? ”

She raised her steadfast eyes to his bent over her.

“Thou knowest.”

Dick kissed her, though Master Oliver thought them both too young.

“And thou canst guess,” he said, “that I shall return to thee, an it were from England, where it seems as if I were dead and buried.”

He smiled in his exultation, but Anne clung piteously to him. “Forget that foolish speech. ’T was like an evil omen. Set the good uncle a time for our meeting ? ”

“Thine eighteenth birthday. Till then I am to leave thee free. I may not send one message meanwhile. For thine own part, dost thou not wish to see me, when I appear,

or hast thou not awaited me, my word is passed to him : I shall not feel aggrieved."

They both laughed at this.

Yet Richard felt it only fair to himself to suggest what he suspected of Master Oliver's schemes already laid.

"Thy kinsman, young Frank, may strive to supplant me, dear. What then? Shalt thou receive me on that day if so brave and gallant a wooer hath laid his share in these wide acres at thy feet to take or to leave?"

"Thy brow is not o'ercast," Nan answered, gazing up at him in the faint light. "I think thee quite as confident as is seemly. Nay, nay," — she dropped her trifling suddenly, — "why need I tell the poor young Puritan that the Papist landowner hath not a chance beside him?"

And again Richard forgot how her uncle had said that they were too young for love-making.

"Thou wilt believe that I trust thee utterly," he urged. "But when that time approacheth, wilt thou not give me a token, sweet? Send me some word in Master Williams's care, and wheresoever I am, on the face of this earth, so the breath of life be in me, it shall call me to thy side."

She touched the ornament at the neck of her simple gown. "I will send thee my golden arrow."

Perhaps Master Oliver had some hint of that interview in the garden. Certain it was that Richard found no more opportunity to speak in private with Anne. When, a few days later, he took passage on a northbound ship, he was forced to content himself with the memory of what was their true farewell. The last formal phrases were uttered in the presence of the entire household.

From Manhattan Dick proceeded to the home of Roger Williams, no longer in the growing town of Providence, but, now that the good man had completed his business in England, at what is to-day Wickford, some twenty miles farther down the bay.

The embassy brought back satisfactory reports. Dick's guardian had obtained a charter for the Rhode Island and Providence colonies, and had employed the time of his visit not only in religious controversy (always for tolerance, as in his representations before the Westminster Assembly), but in making friends among prominent Parliamentarians. He told Richard of a clever disputant, one John Milton.

"But I never met thy father's friend," he added, "albeit I often heard the name of General Goffe. 'T was a strange ordering of events that thus acquainted thee with his whereabouts."

"You think, with Master Oliver and with me," asked Richard, "that this clue placed in my grasp doth plainly signify I should follow it to the end?"

They sat on a bench by the waterside. Roger Williams gazed thoughtfully out over the shining waters of the bay.

"It seemeth a direct call," he answered. "Ay, lad, we must no longer set hindrance in thy path. 'T would be to oppose a higher Power did I bid thee tarry here."

Mistress Williams joined them in time to hear his closing sentence.

"Such is my own belief," she took up the refrain. "Though the time hath come that Richard should be about his life's work, still, first of all, for a brief space, perhaps, he must carry out his father's commands."

The money left to his son by Master Markham Williams had invested in a fishing-boat. It brought in a moderate income, sufficient for the demands of further travel. It also promised extended opportunities in the future.

But both the youth and the older man saw another possibility for the coming years.

“It might be,” said Richard, looking up at his guardian’s wife as she stood beside him, “that no brief space of time suffice. We know not to what I give myself. General Goffe may require long service at my hands.”

Roger Williams bowed assent. He would not notice the sad strain in Dick’s utterance. “And howe’er that befall,” he declared, “thou goest forth in this strength: from certainty to ignorance, from prosperity to hardship, mayhap; yet all shall be right because this is thy duty. No man was ever lost who traveled that straight road.”

CHAPTER XVIII

SHIPWRECK

“ I FEEL like the Wandering Jew,” Dick announced, in parting from the Williams family. “ I seem to have no home and never to abide long in one place.”

He was, however, of a buoyant disposition, a courage that is not easily daunted. Although he fully believed, with Master Williams, that this step might mean the surrender to another of years of his life, there was an element, in the very mystery, which fascinated him. After the farewells were said he amused himself, as upon a former voyage, in watching the coasts of New England recede from view, the changes here and there where man had encroached upon nature, where he passed from the home of the Puritans into New Netherland's jurisdiction.

He made a flying trip to see Lady Moody and her son, returning to Fort Amsterdam as the vessel was about to sail.

“ Thou wilt have fine company,” my lady

informed him. "Dominie Bogardus hath taken passage and also the director general, whose rule here, I rejoice to say, is at an end. I wonder how those two old enemies will pass the time of the voyage together."

They were at swords' points to the last. Dick arrived at the fort on Saturday, so that he might be ready for the weighing anchor early Monday morning. On Sunday he attended the last service held by the dominie, and listened to the plain speaking of that worthy. In round terms he denounced Kieft as a vessel of wrath, a fountain of woe and trouble. The official thus condemned was not present. He had long testified his contempt for the preacher by absenting himself from the preaching. Moreover, the congregation must pay the strictest attention to benefit by even the loud-voiced minister's denunciations. At Kieft's malicious command drums beat and cannon were fired during the sermon, with the intention of drowning what was said.

Richard spent part of his idle day in strolling about the little town, along the ponds and streams which fed the river, and admiring the substantial peaked houses, several of them two stories in height, that offered their gables to

the street side. The Dutchmen he encountered had a comfortable appearance. All of them were well clothed. The colony was beginning to recover from its dejection after the Indian alarms. Under the new director general, Peter Stuyvesant, prosperity was expected. The fifty boweries flourished, quicksilver and gold mines were reported on Staten Island, near the South River, and in the Catskills; Brooklyn, the year before, set up a municipal government. New Netherland was entering upon a happier era.

Not that the West India Company was satisfied with Kieft's administration. It had lost five hundred and fifty thousand guilders above all income from the province. Having lately gone into bankruptcy, it considered the time come for a change which could not be for the worse. Among many grumbling colonists who openly abused their head were two ringleaders, Kuyter and Melyn. They had been indicted under Kieft, one for rebellion, one for advocating treachery towards the natives. Strangely enough, they also were to sail on the *Princess*.

It was amusing to notice their behavior and that of the stout belligerent, Dominie Bogardus, as the long days dragged past in

their ocean life. Not one of the three would acknowledge Kieft's presence by so much as the lifting of an eyelash, and yet, Dick observed, they knew every movement that he made, they heard every sentence that he uttered.

Sometimes one or another would try to lay the old disputes before the youth, relating to his unprejudiced ears, as an outsider, the various causes of their quarrels, or how — with hand held to mouth and lowered voice and sidelong regard — it was reported that in the strong box Kieft guarded carefully he was carrying home four hundred thousand guilders which he had accumulated in New Netherland.

A grievance is always a bore. Dick avoided these confidences when he could, and made friends with a young Scotch weaver, Robert Gordon, who was going home, invalided, after an attempt at emigration.

All went well for the greater part of the voyage. They had enjoyed fair skies and quiet seas until Gordon pointed out to Richard one morning a blue line in the eastern distance and told him that was England.

The lad's heart leaped to his throat.

"I saw it fade away," said he, "when I was

a little child, held up in my father's arms to catch the last glimpse of home. It was home, after all, and we knew not to what we went. So, these years having passed, I come back to it again!"

"You will not lose sight of it hereafter," the other remarked. "We shall steer to the northeast, skirting the coast, to the Severn's mouth. We can view the land as we go."

"Say you so, my wiseacre?" growled a sailor passing by. "You make no account of wind and wave. Gaze on yon sky and see what it can tell you."

While they followed the course of his outstretched arm he hastened on and was gone. Heavy black clouds were piling together along the water's rim. The sun was obscured, a breeze was lashing the billows to foam.

"What meant he concerning our sight of the coast henceforth?" demanded Dick, with a landsman's half interest in these tokens of nearing storm.

Gordon answered more gravely, since he was used to reading the language of the sea: "I suppose he knew we should spy nothing for the coming four-and-twenty hours save raging tempest. You and I must go below, Richard. 'T will blow a gale directly."

They had much ado to reach shelter. For the following day they were as closely cabined as Robert had predicted. Nor did the wind die down when the rain ceased. The Princess was blown from her course. Her mate and the master of the ship were in incessant consultation. Dick, from his ignorance of maritime affairs, remained oblivious to danger.

"How fortunate," he observed to the dominie, "that this hurricane came on when we were near to shore."

The clergyman agreed. "We can get to land," he said; "and if the wind doth not abate, I think we may have to leave the ship. Were safety not close at hand I should begin to be troubled. Heard you e'er such fearful blasts?"

They had ventured to the deck, although they stood in the lee of the cabin, following with curious, careless eyes the course of the staggering vessel, beaten about by contrary winds, and wondering at the walls of water, edged with leaping foam, which shut the Princess in.

A hideous jerk, a crash that resounded above all the fury of the elements, pitched both forward upon their knees. A sensation, such as neither could recognize nor after-

wards define, followed the violence that had overthrown them.

Even their inexperience recognized what had happened.

"The ship hath struck," said the dominie, clambering to his feet. Dick noticed that the old man mechanically dusted the knees of his black velvet breeches and found that he was pulling his own sleeve ruffles into place.

"She hath struck," he repeated in as calm a voice as his companion's. "She is filling fast. We shall not be long afloat."

The dominie pointed to the east. "Think you boats will put out from yonder shore?"

His tone was low and quiet. They were affected by the shock after the same fashion. It rendered them almost apathetic.

"I doubt if there be time," Dick answered.

At that moment Gordon found them. The outcry of their fellow-passengers, the running feet, the harsh, sliding sound of the lowering boats, came to the old man and the youth as if they were something spectacular, wherein their part was that of lookers-on.

"Make haste to the shipside," cried Rob Gordon.

Dick shook off his languor with a physical effort. He seized the clergyman's arm.

"Let us fight for our lives," he said.

They crossed the heaving deck. A boat, crowded to the last inch of space, fell away from the ship as they drew near.

"'T is of no avail," remarked Dominie Bogardus gently.

Robert clasped his other arm. "We will try the larboard side," he suggested.

It was the same thing here. Each boat was filled before they reached it. Nor were they the only ones thus left to die. Kieft stood near the helm, watching the last little craft depart. He was alone, but at some distance those whom he had condemned, Melyn and Kuyter, formed part of a hopeless group, given up to forced resignation that waited patiently for the end.

The director general started at sight of Dominie Bogardus. He looked from him to those others, the men that had fought him with every weapon which came to hand. Their eyes met his.

"Friends," said he, speaking to all three, "I have been unjust to you. Can you forgive me?"

Kuyter came forward. Melyn followed him. They clasped the hand the dominie had seized in his cordial hold. At that solemn hour the feud was healed.

But Dick remembered in one moment's flash the curse of the patroon long ago at New Amsterdam. He recalled the Dutchman's comment that Kieft would never die in his bed. His was a violent end, in truth, and, after fierce contention between them, the old minister and he met side by side, "the last enemy to be destroyed." Their bones lie in the wreck of the *Princess* beneath the waters of Bristol Channel.

Dick stood, quite composed, feeling that he had done all he could. Nothing remained but to await the inevitable. He thought of his mission unfulfilled, he thought of Roger Williams and his wife and the children. He thought ever of Anne, of the tryst with her that he should not keep. Then Rob grasped him in his arms. A giant wave broke over the lowering ship.

"Throw thyself into the water," he was ordered. "Seize a spar. Float away on the crest. We may yet be saved."

Richard saw that the speaker possessed himself of another piece of wreckage. He followed Robert's example, and, together, they drifted from the *Princess* settled to the sea's level.

He could swim, and thus managed to keep

himself afloat, but with no leisure to observe anything that went on about him. He caught faintly a cry from the vessel. He thought he detected something in the distance riding the waves to meet him. He tried to call to Gordon warning him that help might be approaching.

Brine filled his mouth and his ears and his eyes. He saw and heard no more. He choked, essayed to raise his head still further from the plank he clutched, and upon that everything grew black before him.

“This is the end,” he thought.

CHAPTER XIX

BOUGHT AND SOLD

DICK came reluctantly back to consciousness, with an uncertain sense that there were faces brooding over him, that one familiar voice exclaimed in rapture: "He breathes, he breathes," as he wearily opened his eyes.

It was Robert Gordon who bent above him. His hair was wet with blood. His face was white as chalk. But his expression was radiant. He clasped Dick in his arms.

"Thank the Lord, laddie, that thou art saved," he cried.

Richard sat upright gazing about him. A boat had been beached not far away. In the opposite direction lay two bodies, cloths thrown over their heads and clinging to their features in rigid lines that showed succor had come too late.

"Are we all who were rescued?" he asked Robert.

"We and — why, where are Melyn and Kuyter?"

He glanced over his shoulder. One of the fishermen answered :

“They have hired my pony and cart to drive to Taunton. You must be content with such fare and service as our huts here can give you.”

It was like the two Dutchmen thus to provide for themselves without consideration for their companions. Dick was especially fretted, as his reasoning powers returned, because he saw how sorely Robert was in need of attendance. The wound on his scalp was slight, but his ankle had been badly wrenched, and his illness in America left him in no state to combat further injuries.

Nevertheless he made light of the situation. “The main thing is,” he said, so soon as he could draw his friend aside, “whether you have money. Mine — such as I had — went down in the sinking ship.”

“Mine — such as I have,” Dick retorted, “is safe in the belt Mistress Williams made for me. It hath never been unfastened since I quitted Providence.”

Fortunately, by that same careful woman’s advice, he had placed his father’s letter in the leathern pocket. Had this not happened there would have been no message left for him to deliver.

As it was he could pay for their lodging and fare during the several days that passed before even stout-hearted Rob could boast that he was fit to travel. It distressed the young Scotchman that he should retard the other's progress. Once he urged Richard to leave him there and go on.

Dick was sitting on the edge of the narrow pallet bandaging the wounded ankle. Despite their forlorn surroundings and his disagreeable occupation he broke into a laugh.

"Thou art pleased to be mirthful," observed Rob dryly.

"Forgive me. I but thought on my dear father's precept, never to turn my back on one in trouble. And it came to me how strange 't would be were I to disobey him for the first time with so good and fond a friend as thou."

After all they had not long to wait. A week of quiet so pushed Robert's recovery that he pronounced himself ready for any adventure. They set forth through Exmoor Forest, in a carrier's wagon drawn by a shaggy little horse that took them the first day far on their way. Rob must eventually seek a seaport from which to ship for his home in Edinburgh. But there was no reason why he

should not accompany Richard so far as Manchester, and the two clung more closely together for what had happened to them of late.

Their progress was slow, since they must husband their resources, but Roger Williams had given his ward a number of letters — one, in particular, to the powerful Ireton — the sight of which helped them forward. Everywhere they saw the devastating marks of the civil war. Everywhere, since, naturally, they avoided Royalists and sought out Roundheads, they heard the maledictions rained upon Charles Stuart, called by innumerable nicknames and cursed for the woe he had brought to England.

At last — it was a long delayed at last — on a clear winter's day the lads limped into Manchester. The bright sun, the busy streets, encouraged even these weary wayfarers. Their fagged spirits began to rise at the prospect of relief. Surely General Goffe would receive Dick's friend with Dick himself. Surely a warm welcome was at hand for all who came in Edgar Markham's name.

They asked a passer-by if he could tell them where the officer was to be found.

"I know his headquarters," said he, civilly enough. "Take this street to the right. Fol-

low it to the second crossing. Then will you spy a red brick house that stands by itself to the north. There you will meet the major-general or news of him for sure."

Dragging one tired foot behind the other, they chose the road he counseled. By and by they came to the red brick house.

A heavy-faced fellow, in the severe dress more and more affected by the Parliamentary party, was lounging at the gate when they turned the corner.

"The goal is gained," panted Robert.

Dick pulled his precious letter from its pocket.

"I would deliver this message to Major-General Goffe."

The guard glanced at it indifferently. He did not offer to take the cover from the lad's outstretched fingers.

"Then go to Newcastle," said he.

"What mean you?"

"General Goffe is at Newcastle. Get thee thither an thou wouldst have speech with him."

The friends said not a word. Both sank upon the stone step as if their legs had suddenly given way beneath them. With elbows crooked upon their knees, and heads sunk into

their palms, they sat, for a little space, no speech between them, no comment on what had occurred.

Finally Dick staggered to his feet.

"Where now?" asked Rob, uncovering his heavy eyes to look up at him.

"To Newcastle."

A Gordon was not to be outdone. Rob, too, arose.

"Well and good," said he. "I follow whither thou shalt lead me, Diccon."

So the journey began anew. It was harder, henceforth, for every reason. The country about them was cruelly wasted; they were poorer than at first, and they were too exhausted to stand the hardships they must endure. Yet, as there is an end to all things finite, so, when the daylight began to lengthen ever so slightly, Newcastle's wall came into sight.

Robert's lame ankle must often be favored. To-day it had absolutely given out. They were obliged to hire their transportation for the last stage in another carrier's cart.

The driver was disposed to be communicative and full of the intelligence, as it filtered through his dull mind, of the king's latest performance.

From besieged Oxford the unfortunate monarch had fled to — of all people — the Scotch. Dick was astonished, when the news reached them some time before, to see how his comrade received it.

“Why, Scotland was the first to take up arms against his Majesty,” he urged.

But Robert answered: “Against his Episcopate and efforts to force their Prayerbook on her — it was that. Now when England turns against the man, what more fitting than that he seek his own? For the Stuarts are ours, for all. They are true Scots, as the Southerners have ne’er forgot with him, nor with his father before him.”

The clannishness of the Land o’ Cakes is not to be comprehended by outsiders. Dick hid his amazement after that.

As they jogged along the road to Newcastle the carrier was expatiating upon the recent refusal of King Charles to sign the Covenant.

“Obstinate! Heady!” cried Robert. “He rushes upon his fate.”

This was too much for a pupil of Roger Williams.

“Rob, what wouldst say,” he inquired, “should the Commons and the army offer

thee this crown of England if thou turn Papist? Wouldst thou consent?"

Robert flushed angrily. "I would fling my glove — an I had a glove — in the face of a man so base as to bribe me thus."

"Ah, well!"

"What mean you by, 'Ah, well'?"

"Hath not his Majesty but done the like?"

Robert was not especially quick of comprehension. He stared at Dick.

"I cannot see how."

"'Tis but that he will not put on and take off his faith as if it were a shoe that fitted or that pinched. I have deemed your king a mere despot full of tyranny and deceit. But I say that the man, thus urged by his country, by his very wife and son, to save his throne and, it may be, his life, in surrendering his belief, yet who can refuse the offer, has more in him than we are wont to think."

Rob's rejoinder was evasive:

"Thou art ever for the weaker side, and now that is Charles Stuart's."

Still, by the time they entered the town, unlikely as it would seem, Robert was of his friend's manner of thinking. There was

nothing logical in his conversion. It was based, as many such changes are, on pity for the one side and shame for the part of the other.

Something had occurred in the city which drew gossips together at street corners, which sent mounted soldiers galloping back and forth. Rob bent over the cartside to ask one of these troopers :

“ Prithee, sir, what hath happened ? ”

The man pointed over his shoulder with his thumb.

“ His Majesty is yonder.”

“ Where ? ”

“ Here. In the town.”

The carter and his passengers gave a common exclamation of surprise.

“ We thought him at Newark,” Robert explained.

“ Knew ye not,” their informant went on, “ that the Scotch have given him up ? Ay, you may well cry out. They are to have four hundred thousand pounds from the Commons. They have sold their Stuart for so much.”

He cantered away. Rob sank back on his seat so ghastly pale that Dick feared for an instant he would faint.

“ Mine own people,” gasped the boy.

“ Mine own people — and his ! To surrender their flesh and blood for gold ! ”

Patriotism is never stronger than in that moment of return from a foreign land. Robert Gordon was going home, his heart swelling with something higher than a Scot's love for the heather and the hills. Such a greeting well-nigh overcame him.

He was very silent when they alighted. Dick, stealing a sidelong glance towards his friend, made up his mind that Rob must not be bothered, and took all the arrangements for their lodging upon himself.

The carter had recommended a modest hostelry, where they were fairly comfortable, although the town was crowded with a new influx of life. Their landlord was garrulous, and Dick gathered considerable information from him.

“ On the morrow King Charles is to attend church,” he said. “ You must go betimes if you would have sight of him.”

Dick rather timidly questioned Robert if such was his wish. For himself he felt eager to see the man of whom all Christendom was talking.

“ I would fain look on him,” Robert agreed. “ And see,” he added in a bitter

tone, "how good a bargain my countrymen have made."

He did not know Charles the First used much the same phrases in speaking of the transaction. "I am bought and sold," said the king.

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CHAPTER XX

THE MAN IN THE LEATHERN DOUBLET

ON the following day the two lads were early at the church doors, where they formed part of an inquisitive throng bound on the same errand. Boylike, they edged their course deftly through the press, and were able to secure tolerable stations for themselves inside the building long before the service began.

It was the first time either had entered such a structure. Although the richly painted windows had been broken, the sacred emblems removed, and much damage done the carved work, the solemnity of that spot appealed to our young Puritans. Yet in accordance with their teaching they refused to bow the knee during the very simple form of prayer that followed.

It did not begin till, after a tedious waiting, there was a flutter and a murmur about them. A transept door was flung open. Into the square red-curtained pew, on which

all attention fastened, there strode a form on whose appearance involuntarily every member of that vast congregation arose.

Charles Stuart sank upon his knees in prayer, while his attendants filed into the seats behind him. Dick, studying the boyish figure, the pale face, with its sorrowful eyes, could scarcely believe that this was, in truth, the cause of the greatest contest ever waged between a ruler and his people.

The king had requested, which still meant a command, that there be no sermon. These were nowadays too often only political harangues. He was aware how his cause would fare at the hands of that type of preacher — a Scotchman, as it happened. But that type never can be suppressed. The clergyman rose and gave out the fifty-second psalm : —

“ Why dost thou, tyrant, boast thyself,
Thy wicked deeds to prove ? ”

A shocked silence fell upon those witnesses of the brutal insult. His Majesty's thin face did not change, although even Dick clenched his fists and Robert made a movement forward.

In that unnatural stillness a voice rang out, sweet and distinct, gentle, though with the indefinable accent of one accustomed to

the weight of his lightest word. It was King Charles who spoke.

"I crave permission to change the psalm. Will you sing the fifty-first, the Miserere.

"Have mercy on me, Lord, after
Thy great, abounding grace."

He recited the lines so humbly that Richard saw hard-faced women weep, while a choking lump crept up into his throat. Robert was right: he must always be on the weaker side, and that side now was the king's.

With a great sweep, which ascended to heaven in billows of supplication, the company sang the hymn. By one voice they showed their sympathy with a man who could thus receive so wanton an attack. Dick and Robert joined in with the rest, heartily joined, even though it were beneath the roof of a church, and not a meeting-house, and at the bidding of the very head of the Malig-nants.

After the service they lingered about, with many others, to see his Majesty drive away in the waiting coach. From a distance they watched the slight, elegantly dressed man leave the building, his escort surrounding him and striving to keep back the crowd. Despite their efforts several children were pushed for-

ward by their parents. King Charles reached out his hand, so that it rested upon one after another.

"He is touching for the evil," commented some one in the throng.

Robert broke into a wondering exclamation. "What a people!" he cried. "They drive him from his throne, the while they fancy his very body so sacred that the contact of his finger will cure disease."

Our lads were too well taught to transact business upon the first day of the week. With Monday morning recommenced their search for General Goffe. Naturally their first inquiry concerning a soldier was made to one of the regiment of horse about the king.

New factions were constantly rising to further the confusion that covered England. The trooper whom they addressed was good-natured and willing. He was, however, evidently not a partisan of the man they sought.

"Know of him?" he repeated. "In sooth I do. He is connected by marriage with old Noll, and yet he is of the Puritan faction."

"What mean you?" queried Dick bewildered. "I thought there were no divisions, save those 'twixt Crown and Parliament."

The soldier seemed stupefied by this con-

fession of ignorance. Robert hastily explained: "We are but lately come from the colonies. We could not know all that happened here."

"No, that is true. Then have I these news for you. We English are divided into four parties: 'the Queen and hers,' which meaneth the Papists; the Cavaliers, who are Churchmen; the Commons, who are Presbyterians, and the army Independents. The Parliament works for Kirk and State, the soldiers aim at religious liberty. Now General Goffe is among the few officers who do not side with us."

Broadly speaking, this statement of the situation was correct, although William Goffe belonged to a larger minority than the trooper would acknowledge. Dick cared nothing for it all. What he wished to know was this:

"But is General Goffe in Newcastle?"

The man shook his head. "His Majesty's escort are all who remain in Newcastle."

"I said naught of his Majesty's escort," interrupted Dick sharply. "I asked for General Goffe."

"I understood you," was the equally querulous retort. "And I would explain, since

matters here seem strange to you, that the army hath moved to the south. Major-General Goffe is with his men."

Rob threw one arm about the neck of his friend. He avoided a sight of Richard's face.

"Dost thou give up?"

"Never," hissed Dick between his teeth.

"And, if not?" Robert hinted.

"I must turn me to the south."

He drew a long breath of utter weariness.

Robert looked serious at the prospect. "I would fain go with thee" — he began.

"Nay, nay. 'T were not to be thought on. Thou must hasten homeward. We part company here on the banks of the Tyne. The hour has come."

That decision was not accepted at once. They left the streets, wandering aimlessly away into the grimy outskirts of the city, while they reviewed, again and again, every phase of the future. Worry was almost swallowed up in regret for the separation. It was upon this they dwelt, and this that darkened the boyish faces, which suddenly were crossed by another look. The last expression was of surprise.

A slight diversion will attract the mind away from important issues. The friends

saw, in the field before them, nothing more than this: a man, clad in a single garment made of leather, wandered between the hedge-rows. His long hair hung about his down-cast face. He waved his hands as he walked, and muttered and looked up to heaven. Then he prostrated himself upon the ground.

"One of the religious lunatics with whom the land is overrun," Robert decided.

At that moment they spied a woman forsake the footpath she was following, to approach and address the man. After a brief conference she resumed her walk.

Thus she met the strollers. As she drew closer she regarded them intently, while Robert bent forward to peer at her.

"It is thou?" the woman exclaimed.

"Mistress Dyer, in sooth," cried the lad, and they eagerly clasped hands.

Dick could make nothing of the stream of ejaculation and explanation that ensued. Finally Robert remembered his presence.

"'Tis an old friend of the colonies," he said, "who dwelt near us in New Haven, and left us there a twelvemonth since. She saith that she but visits Newcastle, and on the morrow returneth to her home at Maidenhead. Dick, here is a chance for thee."

Mistress Dyer listened to their story with much interest. As Robert had hoped, she proved quite willing that Dick should accompany her family. When she found how little gold the two possessed, and that a skipper promised, because he was an acquaintance of the elder Gordon, to wait for the Scotchman's passage-money till Edinburgh was reached, she offered to supply any needed amount.

"My goodman hath been blessed," she announced. "His stores are increased that we may be free to help our brethren in the faith."

This made Robert think of the fanatic in the leathern doublet. He asked who the man might be.

"Hereabouts," Mary Dyer answered, "they call him Fox the crazy shoemaker. For mine own part — and I have had much speech with him — I deem the man one that is sent with a mission to mankind."

Both lads were to hear of George Fox again, but not at that time.

On the following day they parted at the dockside, more hopefully than they had anticipated: "For, if my health is established, I may try America once more," said Rob. "We shall meet again, Diccon, across the sea."

But little did the three guess where and how that meeting should take place.

So Robert sailed away on the Triton, and Mistress Dyer, her husband, her son, and Dick resumed their journey together. They were in the wake, as it happened, of a mournful royal progress, also to the south.

Richard was obliged and relieved by the monetary aid he received from these new friends, although he was aware that from the fund in Roger Williams's possession he could readily repay it, so that the assistance was not galling, and did not taint his pleasure in their society.

He became a temporary inmate of their pretty home at Maidenhead, for they learned, as they neared the place, that not only the more famous Ireton and Fleetwood, but William Goffe, as well, were expected shortly in the neighborhood. Here, assuredly, that deferred meeting must take place.

"If you would behold a piteous picture," said young Dyer to his mother and their guest one day, "be on the watch at the cross-roads this morning and mark the royal children pass."

Mary Dyer spoke more rapidly than her wonted even tones.

“Where to go?”

“Know you not? To visit their father at Caversham. Get your handful of flowers ready, good mother. The poor babes have done naught amiss, and a sorry lot hath befallen them. Let us give them welcome, at the least.”

Both were cheerfully agreed. Dick and she gathered posies galore before they hastened to the appointed spot to watch for the procession. His Majesty had not seen his little girl nor his youngest son for five years. Prince Henry did not recognize him when they met.

The three children were driven past, hedged in by their attendants. A shout rose from the loyal, or the merely sympathetic, among the lookers-on, who sprang forward, throwing flowers into the road at the horses' feet. A large-featured, dark-eyed boy, bearing a slight resemblance to his grandfather, Henry of Navarre, Richard knew must be James, Duke of York. The pallid girl, with drooping head and soft curls falling in her neck, brought tears to one spectator's eyes. He thought of Nan as he gazed compassionately on the Princess Elizabeth. Then there was the gallant little Duke of Gloucester — he

who, when, at their last interview, two years later, his father warned him he might be placed upon the throne by the setting aside of his elder brothers, made the eager promise:

“They shall tear me in pieces first.”

The pretty touching sight had come and gone. Mistress Dyer threw the faded stalks from her apron.

“Come, Richard,” she called.

But Dick was nowhere to be seen.

An instant before he had been startled by a tug at his doublet sleeve. In the populace streaming along the road he spied a face he knew. It was that of the person who strove to attract his attention.

George Jekyll stood before him.

There was no mistaking the beetle-browed ruffian whom Dick had last met at the hearth of the Maryland planter. There was the same heavy scowl, the same malicious grin the while he scowled.

“I have somewhat to tell thee,” Jekyll announced.

Richard stared stupidly at him, marveling for this interest in his affairs.

“Follow! I cannot speak to thee here,” the other added breathlessly.

The crowd was already sweeping him on. Dick took a step towards him.

“ Whither ? ”

Now they were widely separated from each other. Jekyll leveled his huge forefinger, pointing towards Maidenhead.

And then his face was swallowed up in the sea of faces. But the last glimpse Richard caught of it, it was fixed on him, and it still wore that strange smile of hateful significance.

CHAPTER XXI

“ ’T IS A LIE ”

DICK ran headlong down the road. He forgot about Mistress Dyer ; forgot everything except that he must keep Jekyll, with his mysterious admonition, in sight, or he might lose all chance of learning his message.

He saw the steeple-crowned hat, surmounting the shaggy head, bob along, like a float in a trout stream, through the mass of men in advance. He dared not turn away his eyes as he sped in pursuit.

A portion of the crowd broke off when a wayside inn was reached. The steeple crown belonged to this part. It was swept inside the tavern.

Dick chased after. He threw open the hospitable portal, and passed into the common-room.

Hasten as he might, he had been considerably behind Jekyll and his companions. They had joined a party already ensconced in a corner and when he entered were receiving

their pots of ale from the landlord. Half of the score of men were Parliamentary officers. The others, like Jekyll, wore the severe dress of the Roundheads.

He who had accosted Dick at the cross-roads now ignored his entrance. The lad, overcome by a new shyness, did not like to attract attention before so many witnesses. He threw himself on to a bench, giving his modest order, and determined to seize upon Jekyll when he should part from his friends.

They were discussing at present the great event of the day, that interview between the king and his children. From this they drifted into reminiscences of meetings and of partings and Jekyll appealed to a soldier, evidently the principal man of the group.

"Tell the others, sir," he said, "about that trick you spoke of yesterday: the one your old friend played on you when you dwelt in Sussex."

The officer thus addressed, a bluff gentleman of frank, vigorous mien, knit his brows in annoyance. "That is no tale for public hearing," he responded bluntly.

"Nor are we the public," another urged. "You are among friends here. Speak out."

"'T is no such wondrous story neither." He seemed very reluctant.

“There let us judge,” a third observed.
“Our curiosity is roused. Go on.”

Dick was idly interested. As he munched his bread and cheese he listened for what the Parliamentary at last was induced to say.

“My father was a rector,” he began, “in the rustic parish of Swanmore. I played among the peasants and the farmers’ lads of the place until I grew to be a youth. Indeed a miller’s son and a young yeoman were my two dearest friends. I thought they would have laid down their lives for me ; I knew I would die for them.” There was an agony of bitterness in his tone. “Yet, when a girl came between us, they turned against me like wild beasts. I did not guess that either cared for her. She was of a family far above them both, and while I was still nothing but a boy she married me. One, the farm-lad, had, meanwhile, gone down to Brighton, and become a fisherman. So far was I from dreaming of bad blood betwixt us that I made a journey to the coast, on his return from a voyage, to have sight of him again. He took me out in his little boat ; we were caught in a squall and overturned ” — the voice, which had grown slower and slower, died away. It came to a sudden stop. “After all these

years," he began again at last, "it chokes me when I try to tell it. He climbed into the boat first. As I am a living man," — he brought his fist down heavily on the table, — "that wretch would not rescue me. I called to him and he turned his back. I swam after and he sculled away. He meant to leave me to drown."

There was an outburst of horror.

"How were you saved?" some one inquired.

"I managed to reach a ledge of rock. A sailing vessel took me hence — no thanks to him."

"What said he, when you met?" persisted the same practical questioner.

"We did not meet. He left Brighton that night. To the best of my belief he never returned, nor could I learn what became of him. It was after he had quitted the country that I was enlightened as to his love for the girl I wedded. That, then, was the cause of his treachery. At the time I could not have been more thoroughly stupefied had my wife herself disowned me."

George Jekyll leaned forward, his hands upon his knees. "What was the name of your wouldbe murderer?"

"Edgar Markham."

“’T is a lie !”

The group of men sprang to their feet, aghast at the interruption. Every soldier drew his sword. Dick, his features gray and pinched, confronted them.

The Swanmore officer fell back a little. His own face blanched. “Whom have we here ?” he stammered.

Smirking and bowing, Jekyll advanced between the lad and the soldier. “Let me make you two acquainted,” said he. “Here, forsooth, is a strange encounter. This, sir, is Master Richard Markham. This, my fine fellow, is Major-General Goffe.”

One could have heard the fall of a feather in that second’s pause. Then —

“I knew ’t was his father’s son,” said the general, “so soon as I spied the boy. Well, young sir, you understand why I scarce should seek your company. Will you take yourself off and leave me to my friends ?” His scornful smile was not all ill-natured. “I shall pay no heed to the lie you flung in my teeth. I do not fight with children.”

The world, the black, hopeless world, was whirling round with Dick so fast that he could not see distinctly the gaping, sneering faces that surrounded him.

"Sir," he stammered, "there is some mistake. I know there is some mistake. I bear a letter from my father to you that shall explain the whole."

He spoke wistfully, regarding the other's set features while he fumbled in his doublet.

Goffe raised his brows. "'T is somewhat a hard matter to explain," he observed dryly. "And that is the letter?"

Dick had pulled it forth. "I was to read it first."

"In which case I can wait. Nor am I in haste to come into communication with your father."

The lad did not so much as hear what was said. He crossed over to the window, flung the lattice ajar, and by this light opened the folded paper. Goffe and his companions scrutinized him while he read these sentences: —

"I once did you such wrong as has stained my soul forever. There is blood upon my heart, although Providence so ordained the matter that your life was spared and my hands, so far, are clean. Hear my excuse when, at this late day, I have learned the truth. You remember Carton, the miller's son. I did not dream he lifted his eyes to Edward Whalley's daughter. I know now that he hated you for

winning her as I swear I never hated you — for that. The night before my treachery he told me a strange tale of your brutal, your fiendish treatment of your wife. My brain was on fire. The temptation came, in an instant, when I saw you struggling in the sea. I recalled all he had said. This — so I fancied — was her deliverance. Your death would mean peace to her. For her sake I forsook you; not to win her for myself. Base as I was, I was not so base as that: only to save her from you. It was the deed of one mad moment. In another I repented and came back. Too late, for you were gone: sunk in the waves, I thought, and so I thought for years. They have been years of remorse which would satisfy even your sense of justice. But I need not dwell upon that. Yesterday I met Carton here in Boston. He confessed all he told me, all that made me sin, was false. The crime upon my conscience was a senseless crime.

“I am stricken with a fatal disease. I never can make restitution on this earth. My son must bear his father’s burden. I have tested the lad, and I know him. He shall seek you, though it were to the ends of the world: he shall do you service with the last

drop of blood in his body. So will he plead for my pardon. That you grant it prayeth,

" EDGAR MARKHAM."

Dick never was to know a darker moment than the one in which he turned to face his little world again.

" And what saith the script ? " inquired William Goffe in his scoffing tone.

Dick lifted his wretched eyes. They fell before the cold hard stare.

" Sir, you told the strict truth. My father did all you said."

Goffe smiled sardonically. " I scarce need you to back my word. But what saith the script ? He hath some excuse, no doubt."

" Ay, sir, he had excuse." The lad extended the folded sheet. Goffe waved it away.

" I am in no humor, after twenty years, to hearken to a petition for forgiveness."

Up to this point Richard had remained calm. Now his lip quivered. If that row of wide-eyed, amused spectators would betray one sign — not of pity to himself: that, of all things, he could not bear — but of compassion for the dead penitent ! Their disdainful silence was worse even than Jekyll's broad smile or Goffe's implacable anger. He

was sufficiently just to recall the former's grudge, and to recognize, with the soldier, how a nature warped in early life by the dishonor of a friend could not readily bend itself to a kinder form. Still, Dick must appeal to him once again. That letter should be read.

"You will not prove me doubly a liar?" he said, almost in a whisper. "General Goffe, I pledged mine honor that you should receive this message."

"Give it here," was the gruff response.

He read the page, his expression unaltered. He creased it precisely, and handed it back to the youth.

"A web of silly stuff," was his comment. "And why should Ned Markham credit Carton to mine injury? Nay, nay, 't is all folly together!" He roused himself from the reflective attitude into which he had fallen. "Begone, sirrah," he cried to Dick. "I said, ere this, that you owe so much to me not to offend my sight by your presence."

The eager bystanders wondered that Richard did not move. They wondered more when, as one keeping himself in restraint by a brute force, the lad advanced and saluted William Goffe.

"I offer, sir," he said hoarsely, "my service to you in any honorable sort. I am at your command to the last drop of blood in my body."

Doubtless the phrase recalled to Goffe's mind his letter's equal admission. He colored deeply, so that Jekyll, mistaking the cause, made derisive comment.

"A beardless boy is like to be of use to General Goffe!"

"Or say," the officer set him aside, speaking in high, harsh tones, "that I would rather die than accept aught at the hands of Edgar Markham's son."

"And his son would rather die," said Dick between his teeth, "than offer it to you. Yet, sir, it lieth at your feet."

"But is rejected." Goffe whirled about on his heel. "You are free from your part of the bargain, for you have faithfully performed its office. I will take no favor from you now, nor ever, while we both shall live. I trust we may not be forced to meet again."

Jekyll's grin, across the shoulder of his patron, brought to Dick's confused memory something like Goffe's last words, which had passed between himself and this ruffianly adventurer, when they parted on the Maryland plantation.

“Oh, I pray,” he whispered to himself, “the Lord will be kinder to me at any such future encounter with William Goffe than He hath been in this second meeting with George Jekyll!”

And the Lord was kinder, but all that was hidden away far in the future.

There was nothing more to be said, nothing more to be done. Dick left the group, now muttering together with sidelong grimaces at him. He rushed from the house, nor paused in his headlong stride until the town was far behind.

He wandered aimlessly through the fields, like one who was stricken with blindness. He saw no sign of nature's growth about him. All was blotted out by the monstrous fact that brooded over his life. He must readjust the love for his father, the tender remembrance, the honorable pride upon which his spirit was stayed.

Night had begun to fall when he first perceived how far he had strayed from home. That home appealed to the stricken boy as a blessed haven where he might find something, even now, of comfort and rest. Mary Dyer and her family would not stare mercilessly upon his trouble. They would not

keep themselves aloof, as if Edgar Markham's son were a leper.

The lump of lead that he bore in his breast beat like his heart once more. His eyes softened, though it were to tears. "Thank God for such friends," he thought, and took his way to them.

CHAPTER XXII

THE BLACK-EYED GIRL

MARY DYER and her husband proved not alone the kindest but also the most judicious of friends to Richard in this hard time. They drew him gradually from his morbid brooding upon what had happened; they diverted his mind by degrees. Finally, when on one occasion he exclaimed: "My father's spirit will not rest in peace until I have fulfilled his mission!" Mistress Dyer silenced him with: —

"That is sickly nonsense, Diccon. The offer was all thy part: the taking, or the leaving, remained with William Goffe. Knowest what is the doctrine of good George Fox, he whom thou and Rob Gordon spied wandering through the lanes of Newcastle?"

"The man in the leathern doublet?" Dick inquired, with languid interest. "What doth he teach?"

"That naught good can be performed save by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit.

What is so done is perfect, beyond man's hindrance or help. Thy conduct of thy father's affair was obedient and selfless. If by their fruits ye shall know them, 't was guided of the Paraclete. He helped thee to accomplish all that thou canst do. William Goffe's portion of the task is what now remains unfinished."

Dick was attracted to this creed because it reminded him of that taught by Nan's mother and held by her sect. Indeed, before this, he had found that Mistress Dyer was an acquaintance, in her colonial experiences, of the Witch of the Connecticut, and inclined to the Hutchinsonian doctrines. He kissed the hand of his friend.

"I thank you, madam," he said. "I will try to be less doubtful and downcast in the future."

That future pressed upon him to consider. There was no further excuse for lingering in England. His chief interests lay with Roger Williams, nor did the Old World hold out inducements.

In Sweden the eccentric Christina reigned as successor to her father, Gustavus Adolphus. Germany was ending the Thirty Years' War begun in the time of Frederick, brother-in-law

to Charles the First. Holland concluded another peace with Spain about the same time. France was struggling in that long, patient contest between people and king: it was fruitless while Anne of Austria and her minister Mazarin ruled over the head of the child Louis XIV. It was to gather fury, for a whole century to come, when Louis's descendants atoned for all.

Everywhere was war or slow recovery from war: here in Great Britain, there on the Continent. Nothing in the prospect promised so well as the life — and that, too, would have its contentions — upon the shores of America.

During the period of awaiting remittances from home there arrived at Maidenhead Robert Gordon's sister Jean. She brought messages from her brother, and Dick saw her often while she and her family were settling themselves in a cottage near to Mary Dyer. This slight social intercourse agreeably wore away the weeks. And then Master Williams's kind letter came full of good-will, albeit expressed in the formal phrases of the period. His wife joined him in sympathy regarding the failure of the lad's English mission. They extended a truly paternal welcome, urging his return.

The Dyers would not persuade Richard to a longer stay in their unhappy country. Mary bade him an affectionate leavetaking, when he proceeded to London, accompanied by Master Dyer. Business on Roger Williams's behalf compelled Dick's presence in the city before he set out on his ocean voyage. His companion had a similar excuse, but the trip was rather of the nature of a pleasure excursion in the life of the hard-working countryman. He and Dick improved the opportunities of what was a first visit to both.

London showed many traces of the civil war, since the Roundheads were largely represented among its inhabitants. The hatred of Church and Crown was fiercest in those streets where corner preachers or strolling ballad singers voiced a mad aversion to the tottering powers under which they lived. The lad and his older friend found much entertainment in all this, entertainment of another sort in the Abbey, in St. Paul's majestic spaces, in the Tower, and in the Houses of Parliament. They strolled past St. James's Palace, and gazed at its rows of windows, wishing they might catch a glimpse of the royal family. With the exception of the Princess Mary, who had married William of

Nassau before these evil days began, and save for the oldest son and the youngest daughter, the king's children were here, under the charge of the Earl of Northumberland.

"I should think they might manage to escape," Dick remarked to his companion.

Dyer answered from the information he had acquired: "The princess, poor little dear, is too weakly and too timid to make the attempt. And Prince Henry is scarcely more than a babe. There is no fear of them."

"But the Duke of York? From his look, when I saw him on the Maidenhead road, he must be some fifteen years of age. And unless I read his dark eyes amiss, he has resolution in plenty for any desperate deed."

"'T is said the earl was of your mind. He asked Prince James to pledge his honor neither to read nor write aught that was not shown to himself. Thus is he cut off, while so closely spied upon, from any schemes by which his friends might work with him. And what could he alone?"

"I should scarcely think," Dick reflected, "that the Parliamentarians, who believe all evil of the Stuarts, would place faith in the boy's promise. Should you?"

"Yet they do," Dyer answered. "I have

heard a many tell the tale. Not one but added: 'He will keep his word; that much can be said for him.' "

"When freedom is the stake, 't is much to say," was Richard's comment. And then the subject dropped.

On one of those pleasant spring days Master Dyer proposed that they two make an expedition to Gravesend. Here they walked among the shipping, inspected a Dutch vessel at anchor, and, in the long twilight, started on their return to London.

A tiny riverside inn attracted the hungry travelers. They stepped within its open doors to secure supper and a bed.

"I know not what to make of the man," quoth Dyer to his friend, as the landlord left them. "There is no sign of other guests, and the place seemeth poor, though neat and clean. Still, an my wits have not played me false, thou and I are not welcome here. What thinkest thou?"

"It is but his churlish way," Dick answered. "How could it be otherwise, in reason? But I, too, marked how uncivil and sour he looked."

Dyer's was rural timidity when launched into the world. "I shall keep mine eyes on

the fellow," he continued. "Somehow or another, the place hath to me the air of a den of thieves. What if," he bent across the board to hiss his suspicion into Richard's ear, "thou and I should both be robbed and murdered?"

"Oh, nay, master," the other urged. "Were the man after that fashion he would strive to lure us hither, not to rebuff with harsh words and tones. I have small dread for our necks or our gold. The more I watch what goes on about us the more I fancy that there is a secret hid away behind yon door, — there, to the right. We have chanced to come at an hour when the master of the house is in terror lest one of us may guess it."

Dyer's gaze fastened upon the entrance in question. It led to an inner room.

"Thou hast ever thy wits about thee." His admiring exclamation was in the constrained, low voice which he had hitherto employed. "What put the surmise into thy mind?"

"Our host disappeared thence when he left us. That man who entered but now cast an anxious glance towards it. A moment since the latch was lifted. I saw some one peep out, but draw back quickly, while whispering took place. And then" —

As he spoke the door opened.

Two figures crossed the room together. They were preceded by the sullen landlord, but he was not sullen now. His features glowed with pride. He bowed low before the gentleman and the tall maiden whom he conducted to the entrance.

"This way, my lord and lady," said he.

Dyer wriggled about in his seat to follow the movements of all three. He thus missed the sight which roused Dick's amazement. The gentleman appeared worried and walked fast. The girl was awkward, her cloak swung out with the long steps she took. Contrasting her, as Dick contrasted every woman, with Anne, he considered her remarkably uncouth.

In passing, she uttered an impatient sigh. Like a flash she threw one foot up on the table, and bent to adjust her stocking that was falling over her shoe.

What sort of girl was this?

Richard looked straight into the dark face bent so near him, while its owner's clumsy fingers tied her garter. The hood could not altogether screen those strongly marked features. He stared straight into the sombre eyes.

He recognized James, Duke of York.

Quickly he stooped his head. He kissed the hand that worked beside him. James cast an apprehensive glance across the table, but Dick knew Master Dyer's abstraction. He murmured, "All 's well."

The prince's palm just touched his shoulder. Some day, when it belonged to a king, it would bestow more than one knightly honor, but never accolade so fraught with meaning, with gratitude and brotherly fellowship.

All was over in an instant. The little group swept by and out of the house. Richard and Master Dyer resumed their interrupted meal.

Many a theory concerning that scene did the good man hazard, though never one so strange as the plain truth. Richard listened, and commented, and marveled, too, but he kept his counsel.

On their arrival in the city they were met by news for which one of them was prepared. The Duke of York had escaped.

"No promise was given against message by word of mouth," so Master Dyer retailed his information. "George Howard, brother to the Earl of Suffolk, thus laid the plan with him. The royal children have spent their evenings, of late, in games of hide-and-seek.

During one of these Prince James was spirited out of the garden and into a coach. It carried him away to the river. Men say he was well disguised, and that, although the alarm went out at once, for some reason the one port that was not searched was Gravesend. From thence he hath joined his sister in Holland. That is the end of him."

Well, perhaps, for England, had the careless speech been true. But it was not the end of James. Nor could he dream, he and that sister, Mary of Orange, how her son and his daughter should rule in his stead, when the Stuarts — and this time the last time — again were driven from the throne.

That was to come to pass. But when Dick, in his turn, left England behind him, and sailed to the west, as the black-eyed girl had sailed to the east, the rumors were of another sort.

They said the days of Charles Stuart were numbered. The first monarch ever to die by the law of the land was shortly to mount the scaffold.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE WEAKER SIDE

“To me, it seemeth, Richard,” Mary Williams rather dryly remarked, “that you carried yourself, while in England, like a right good Cavalier.”

Her husband smiled, as if he understood her allusion, while Dick flushed with annoyance.

“How so?”

“Your sympathies were all on the side of the Crown, is it not true? from the time you saw the king in Newcastle, to that when you were a partner to the flight of the Duke of York.”

“Why, ’t was then as ever with me. I thought only that this was the losing part. When I knew Prince James, at the riverside tavern, in the guise of a girl, I took no stand for Roundhead nor for Royalist. All that crossed my mind was: here is a friendless lad, fleeing for his liberty. I could not betray the boy.”

He addressed Master Williams directly.

“I wonder how ’t would seem, for once in my life, to be with the winning and those in power. My intercourse hath always lain on this same weaker side.”

“Nor shalt thou e’er be loosened from it,” was Roger Williams’s rejoinder, “so long as thou art friend to me.”

Dick had no sooner arrived at Cawcawn-squissick (now Wickford) than he saw matters with the apostle of religious liberty were more than usually awry. In recounting the honors due to this most remarkable pioneer, it should never be forgotten that Roger Williams not only preached but practiced freedom of conscience for his colony, at a time when it was almost the sole spot on earth where such freedom was enjoyed. In Maryland the Papists insisted upon the tolerance by which alone they existed. In New Netherland the theories taught by the mother country were carried out, not fully, but further than in Holland, where the Calvinists had killed Barneveld, the Arminian, and imprisoned Grotius. Nowhere else in the whole civilized world, save in Rhode Island, was a man’s faith undisturbed.

It may be guessed how many and how

ludicrous were the fanatics who flocked to this land of promise. Roger Williams's rule must have been a marvel of wisdom that it was marked by such general quiet. And still the more must it have worn upon him. Then there were incessant mean rivalries and disputes to prevent the necessary union of his plantations. Massachusetts and Plymouth harassed the colony by open designs towards dismemberment. There was enough to fret the overworked man, outside the care of a growing family, and business worries in establishing a trading house for traffic with the Narragansetts, and in his missionary labors among this tribe.

But Williams was a man who consistently taught justice to all. He would not burden his ward with his affairs. "We must turn now," he said to Dick, "to settling thee in earnest, lad. Thou hast been a rover too long."

"You know my ambition," was the answer.

"For a little ship of thine own? I see how it may be brought to pass and at no distant day. Thy fishing-boat hath done well. Thou hast a goodly store put by for some such scheme. May thou be blessed in it, my son."

He gave what was indeed a fatherly interest to the plan as it unfolded. Dick devoted himself to the fisheries until, although money was scarce in the colonies, and most earnings must be in the form of barter, he laid the foundations for his further essay. When he became the master of a small ship he was the proudest youth in New England. He expected to carry building lumber to Great Britain, and fish and staves to Portugal, or the West Indies, bringing back from the latter ports sugar and fruits and from the former that ready money whose want so crippled the commerce of the New World.

Mistress Williams and her children often visited the boat as it was planned and built. They made a gala journey to view the completed vessel just before the launch.

She was brave in new paint and snowy sails, her young master delightedly displaying every detail of her finery, below and above decks.

"This is the first time, mistress," he observed to Mary Williams the elder, "that I have known how sweet was entire success. There is but one thing left me for which to ask."

“Fortunate youth ;” she smiled, “for you think, do you not? that the one thing lacking awaits your visit to Maryland?”

He laughed his assent, in sheer high spirits.

“Why, Richard,” Providence Williams interrupted them to protest, “you have kept it so close a secret — what was your ship’s name — I am sore disappointed ! I thought, for sure, ’t would be some grand title, and there it turns out to be but a stupid device that meaneth naught to any one in the world.”

He pointed to the bow. On either side the figurehead, stretching towards the ocean, gleamed the long, straight line of a golden arrow.

Dick shook the pouting boy merrily by the shoulder.

“That is all thou knowest of it, chuck,” he said. “The token is one right dear to me. Let us go home now and find thy father. I would that he saw my new plaything, too.”

As they proceeded up the street to the house, Mistress Williams, to Dick’s astonishment, drew his attention aside. “Ask not Roger to-day,” she pleaded, “to look at thy ship, for I fear — well, he hath not the spirit to make an effort, even for one so dear as thee.”

“Nor have you.” His eyes, no longer self-absorbed, studied the careworn features. “Oh, that I should have fretted you with my small concerns when you were distressed like this!”

His heart sank at the realization of their trouble. Then followed the swift reflection: “This is my natural state. The other, the gay gladness, is never long for me.”

“What is it?” he asked tenderly.

“Poor Dick,” the kindly woman replied. “We would not cloud your bright day with our blackness. But Roger must be left to himself for the present. He is in a most difficult strait.”

“And why?”

“It seemeth necessary that he visit England again, or Coddington, our enemy, will secure a charter rending asunder the colony and undoing all my husband’s work. And still — how can he go? What shall we, his family, do meanwhile? The question confronts us day and night. We cannot read its answer.”

Nor could Dick at first. The speaker was a woman enfeebled by her rigorous life, and with six children, the eldest a girl of eighteen, the others mere little ones, all dependent

upon the exertions of one whose presence was surely more to them than his absence could be to the settlement.

He expressed something of this to Master Williams, who answered almost with impatience : —

“ All that is true. It is also true that a leader of men owes somewhat to his followers. I must toil for my own, or I am worse than an infidel, as the Book declareth. And yet — to see the fruits of my labor in this plantation decay and drop off for lack of tendance — I tell thee, Richard, such a moment is bitter hard to face.”

Reading aright the pitiful expression of his ward, he recalled their conversation on Dick's last return to Providence : —

“ Said I not, once on a time,” was Williams's rueful observation, “ that, so long as we were friends, thou shouldst ever be on the weaker side ? ”

The words brought back more than that scene to Richard. He remembered the promise to his father. He thought of all that this staunch ally had done for Edgar Markham's child. Here was opportunity for repayment, here his chance, again to help those in need of help.

And Roger Williams could not guess what the next speech cost.

“You shall go to England, sir. I will care for your household.”

“Thou, dear son? Impossible.”

“Why impossible, since, of your goodness, you call me son? Is it not a child’s place to provide for his mother and the little ones?”

Roger Williams resolutely refused to parley with this temptation. “Nay, thou hast thine own future. It shall not be hampered by burden of mine. I will not consider so monstrous an injustice.”

“When I came to you, a homeless orphan, you said no such words as these. You and the dear mistress took up the added duty without complaint. Am I so much worse than you?”

“All this is different. You would marry”—

“That can wait,” said Dick.

“You are making your first steps in the world. I tell you, I will not pull you back.”

“Ah, I see truly.” Dick bit his lip. His eyes darkened. “Though I have oft been given the name, I was never son to you. This proveth it.”

“Diccon, why speak so?”

“’T is from my heart. Were Providence

of my years, and in my position, would you refuse his aid? Answer me that."

Roger Williams grew very sober.

"If Providence stood in thy stead, I confess I would leave the others in his charge. Oh, Dick, God bless thee; I will give them unto thee."

Thus it was settled. Mistress Williams made her own feminine moan over the necessity, although accepting the one way out of the difficulty. Richard was relieved that she made no reference to Anne Hutchinson.

The fact was she believed Richard to be only laying up disappointment through his hopes. During his absence in England a Protestant immigrant from Maryland had repeated, in her hearing, certain gossip concerning the Oliver plantation.

"'T is common talk," the man asserted, "that the Papist's only son and sole heir hath no eyes for any save his cousin, Mistress Anne. And she a Hutchinsonian, forsooth!"

"But hath she eyes, as well, for him?" Mary Williams had questioned.

"So it is freely said. The old man is feeble, and, albeit he withstood young Frank, nor could convert his niece, the folk whisper

that no sooner will the breath leave his body than that child is made mistress of all. I tell the tale as 't was told to me. I know not."

Thus it was that Mistress Williams failed to bring forward the argument which her husband had used in vain.

Before his own departure for England Richard's guardian insisted that he snatch a brief holiday from the weary task ahead and conduct his ship somewhere upon a trial trip. This, naturally, was along the Sound. Dick longed to see Lady Moody and relate to her sympathetic ears all that had occurred since their parting.

He was putting off in his little boat to the Arrow when the ship's boy respectfully saluted. He carried a package in his hand.

"A stranger gave me this but now," he explained, "and told me no answer was required. He said you would understand."

Perhaps Dick did understand even at that first moment. He waited till he had reached his cabin before opening the gift.

"How uneven this world is made," sighed the boy to the man at the helm. "Now there's young master," he pointed towards the companionway. "He has everything be-

fore him. He owns this ship ; he will lay up riches ; he is comely and well and strong. Think of the difference between such as him and such as you or me ! ”

The mate cuffed the child for coupling their names together. In his secret soul he concluded : “ It is true in the main. A few years ago Diccon Markham was proud if I gave him a seat in my fishing-boat, or a line to try for cod. And now he calls me servant, and I say ‘ sir ’ to him. He hath everything in life. I have naught save the wage he hands me. It doth not seem quite fair.”

Presently he sent the boy below. He wished to consult their master upon the course.

Little Tom came flying back. His round cheeks were glowing, his expression was startling in its surprise.

“ Hast seen a ghost ? ” asked the mate, contemptuous but wondering, too.

“ I have seen Master Markham ! I know,” he gasped out his speech, leaning against the helm and looking up at the man beside him, “ you will not believe me. The young master hath been weeping.”

“ Thou fool ! Weeping, forsooth. Why should he, of all men, weep, and on this day ? ”

“ Ah, why ? Is ’t likely I would invent so silly a falsehood ? Nay, he tried to hide it, and turned him away, but I saw. He sprang from his berth to let me in. Master Jenkyns, he lay flat there, on his bed, with face against the wall. In his hand, the while he stood and spoke to me, what think you he was clutching ? ”

“ I cannot say. The story is all foolishness together.”

“ It sounds like foolishness,” Tom stoutly declared, “ yet it is sooth. He held tight ’twixt his fingers just an ornament such as some fine lady bedecks herself withal : not the trinket of a Puritan, nor of a sailor man. ’T was a little golden arrow, Master Jenkyns, that he clasped.”

CHAPTER XXIV

WHEN THE MESSAGE CAME

“AND so,” said Richard gayly, “you see before you a ship-owner, no less; the master of the Arrow, a trader with foreign parts, one launched upon his voyage to the Fortunate Isles.”

“And what hath gone wrong?” asked my lady.

“Then you know?” Dick dropped his brightness of manner as suddenly as it had been assumed. “What do you know, dear madam?”

“Any one who loved you could read your face, poor lad. Nay, Diccon, that is all I have learned. Wilt thou tell me of the rest?”

Thereupon, unreservedly, he poured out the whole story: “The worst, the crown of the misfortune, lieth in this,” he continued. “I could bear, with such patience as may be, that our marriage is delayed until Master Williams’s uncertain return, years hence, perchance. But that, before Anne’s eighteenth

birthday, and, therefore, showing some sudden, pressing need, she should send for me, and I not respond, — oh, madam, the shame, no less than the pain of it, the burning, consuming shame ! ”

“ No word came with her token ? ”

“ I saw not the messenger myself. He was passing stupid, for he sent the gift with but the assurance that no answer was required. And that,” Dick smiled grimly, “ at least, we know was false. Certainly he had not a letter, though, doubtless, could I have questioned him, somewhat else were discovered. But the arrow alone speaketh all too plain.”

Lady Deborah sat in profound meditation. Dick, facing her high-backed chair, leaned forward, his elbows on his knees : —

“ You think,” he questioned wistfully, “ that I have no warrant for proposing marriage ? You know what I own, you know my prospects : and there are the dear mistress and her children for me to tend.”

“ Seven besides thyself. Nay, dear lad,” she saw the heavy dejection deepen upon his face, while she forced out the unwelcome truth, “ thou hast already a heavy burden for those young shoulders to bear. No matter how dire Anne’s strait may be — ”

"That is it," he interrupted eagerly. "If it is extreme, would not the poorest shelter, the scantiest fare, prove a mercy in comparison? May it not be such that I must offer all I have, miserable as my all is now?"

"Not while there is another way." My lady's expression cleared. She straightened herself in her seat, tapping imperiously upon the carved arms with the tips of her fingers. "Hearken, my child. I had a letter, not long time since, from Dame Gray, the same whom thou and Anne took with you to Maryland. She is unhappy there, as she was here, — as she would be anywhere. But her complaints have touched me, I have heard so many, and I thought of rescuing her from what she calls a nest of Papists. I shall send for her now. I shall send thee."

Dick shook his head: "Nay, though I wish you might! Then could I see for myself to Anne and her affairs. The Goody said naught of them?"

"'Twas ne'er her custom to think much of others, while always busy with her own grievances. Nor can she write. She dictates to another, and but a line or two. And what is thine excuse for not fetching her to me?"

"That Master Williams must sail but shortly, when I cannot tarry away from home."

“Not an thou pay no visit to me, as was planned, and start at once? So should thy leave of absence be spent in this further journey.”

Dick seized and kissed her hand.

“Stupid me! I never thought of that.”

“Here is more for thee to think on. Thou and Goody Gray shall bring Anne north to me — Hush, be still! I will keep her here. She shall be safe, and, so far as we can make her, happy, till the day when thou art free. How liketh thee my plan?”

“Oh, my lady, you are an angel,” Dick gasped. “Yet — yet — I fear me Anne will feel (as I know I should, but, some way, cannot muster pride enough), that she should not be beholden to even so sweet a friend.”

“Thou canst set such fear at rest. I do need her. In sooth I do. The home and the estate should have a younger pair of hands and feet at their beck and call, a younger woman whose thought for them would be no surface care, but the ready aid of a daughter. Let her come to me as a child of the house. Had I a maid of my own I might not ask for Anne. I wish her company because that I have no daughter.”

“Selfishly, I should be glad, perhaps,”

Richard laughed, in his new sense of boundless relief, "and for more reasons than one. Had you a daughter, my lady, and she like her mother, what a divided heart mine were, betwixt her and Anne Hutchinson."

The lady rapped his cheek with her fan, calling him a saucy fellow. Still, she liked the compliment and liked him for paying it.

Thus it came to pass that Jenkyns and Tom the ship's boy were cheated out of the holiday they had promised themselves at New Amsterdam. During the day after their arrival the young skipper appeared in violent haste, would hear of no delay, but called all hands on board the Arrow, ready for a voyage to the south.

The journey was without incident. Favored by fair winds, they had a prosperous passage and soon let down their anchor in St. Mary's harbor.

Here Dick engaged a horse to carry him up the river. He traveled slowly along this further course, pausing frequently for a meal, or for lodging, while he plied his entertainers with questions as to the gossip of the colony. He knew that, in so isolated an existence, even the smallest fragment of news was of sufficient importance to be freely bandied

about. He trusted to learn, in this manner, what was wrong at the Oliver plantation, and make his arrangements in accordance with such information.

After long waiting, the name he had listened for was mentioned. A settler brought him a gourd of water and lingered beside his steed for a chat. This man broke out : —

“There are fine doings, they tell me, at Frank Oliver’s house. You know young Frank? I thought so, from your look just now. He is in no small trouble, ’t is said, from the terms of his father’s will.”

“How is that?” Dick asked. “Is his father dead?”

“Since last January. It seems the thing standeth thus. There is an orphan niece — have you heard of the niece?”

“Yes.”

“Well, Frank is mad for love of her. Careful, sir, you will spill the water. That gourd is a tottlish thing. What was I saying? Oh, of Frank and Mistress Anne. His infatuation hath been common talk for years. But she is a heretic who could not be turned from her errors. So the father refused his consent.”

“And the girl?” said Dick.

The next moment he indignantly asked

himself why he should put the question. Had the girl not sent him a golden arrow?

"Oh, Mistress Anne? Why, she was ready enough, no doubt. Women don't throw away so good a chance. Frank is a proper fine young fellow, and he hath the broadest acres in the province, if — but there's the pinch — if Anne Hutchinson become a Catholic, or if they do not wed. Should he marry her, and she continue of her present way of thinking, all will go to an English cousin. And so they hesitate. I hear poor Mistress Oliver is beside herself. She can neither move her son from his stand that, Protestant or no, he will have none save Anne, nor can she bring her niece into the Church's fold. The dilemma hath its amusing side. Is it not so?"

"Oh, yes," Dick absently assented. "Very amusing."

He handed back the empty gourd, thanked the garrulous planter, and resumed his ride.

So this was how the matter stood. Probably the distracted mother would be only too glad if deprived of the cause of strife. On the other hand, doubtless Frank Oliver guessed that Anne's flight would be a relief, not alone to the hectored girl, but as well to the rest of the family. Dick could compre-

hend that the watch kept upon Nan had been too close for her to send so much as a scrap of writing to him, when the sudden opportunity came which she grasped as a means of communication. He saw the scene with, on the whole, a prophetic sense of what had taken place: Anne, learning of some one's approaching voyage to Rhode Island, her whispered directions, her unfastening the brooch from her gown. It all rose up before him as if he had been present.

His horse cantered easily along the high-road, the while he reflected upon the situation. He struck the pommel with delight in the decision at which he had arrived.

"The dame shall help us out," he cried aloud.

He diverted from his direct path, seeking that towards the humble home whereof Nurse Gray was an inmate. Her brother and his household appeared unflatteringly willing to bear separation from her; the old woman received her deliverer as if he had been her own flesh and blood.

"Yes, yes, I shall take you to my lady," Dick agreed. "But, first, you will do something for me, Goody, will you not?"

"If I can," she answered.

“This you can. Go to Master Oliver’s plantation, to-night, at dusk. Ask to see the mistress, and see her alone. Give her this letter. ’T will explain all she need know. When she readeth, of a surety she will help you — and Anne — after any fashion. You must aid her in collecting Nan’s garments and seeing them secretly conveyed to the waterside at dusk. Then find Mistress Anne. Harken to this message, dame, for I would have you give it word for word: ‘The golden arrow hath gone to its mark. He who bears it now will be at the pier edge this night when the first stars are out.’ Canst thou remember?”

After an effort or two she repeated the sentences correctly.

“You shall join us there,” Dick concluded. “And then — and then for Lady Deborah!”

So he sent away the old woman, enduring the day in such impatience as made the sunset seem years distant. At length twilight fell, whereupon he parted from the Grays, having procured directions where he might meet a passing sloop. So Richard came to the trysting-place.

Wild birds called sleepily to one another. Strange insect sounds were wafted to him.

He heard a beast growl in the forest, a negro's song from the plantation.

Finally his ear caught that for which his whole being had waited. There was a step across the grass, the swish of skirts, the tremor of frightened breath.

"Nan," he cried in a shrill whisper.

Two women emerged from among the trees into the starlight. The bent form, hobbling with a cane, came first. Close behind was a slender, graceful figure, holding about her a long blue cloak as she ran. She pushed the other towards Richard : —

"Her, first," was the hurried, hissed direction. There was no syllable of greeting.

Accordingly he held up his arms, standing unsteadily in the rocking boat : "Come dame," he murmured. "Be quick ! Be quick !"

She sprang down very agilely. He seated her in the bow and turned for Nan. At the same moment there rose a shriek that chilled his blood. Dick made a frantic dash towards the bank, for a dozen slaves had surrounded the figure in the long blue cloak. Her cries thrilled him. He could see her struggling to free herself from the grasp of those determined men.

But what was this? The dame seized an oar, shoving the boat from the pier. The water widened between them and the land.

“ Make haste to the sloop,” she said.

CHAPTER XXV

“STEP OUT OF THE LIGHT”

THE passenger sloop lay directly beyond a curve in the bank. It would take only a moment to reach it had Richard any notion of deserting the girl whom he had come these many miles to release. The thought flashed through his brain.

“That selfish dame! Her one consideration is to save herself.”

He poised his body for a spring across the gulf between him and the land. A firm grasp was laid upon his wrist.

“Thou shalt not go.”

In his excitement he paid no heed to the whisper. He tried to shake off her hold.

“Oh, Diccon, love,” half laughing and half crying, she went on, “canst thou not see who played the Goody’s part?”

“Nan?”

“Here, take the oars. Make haste, Dick, I tell thee, to the sloop.”

He dropped obediently upon the seat, nor

did he speak again. In swift, short strokes he propelled the tiny bark across the river, then to the south, and thus about the curves of the shore. The larger vessel was awaiting them.

Bewildered, almost stunned, Dick knew this — that Anne was beside him, that the woman whose screams still woke the echoes was one whom his dear advised that they leave to her fate. He trusted everything to her.

Nor was he surprised to find another Goody, clad in the like scarlet capè and peaked hat, alike leaning on her cane, and standing on the deck when they mounted to it.

“ Dame Gray was sent on ahead by my wise aunt,” Nan explained, clinging to his arm, now that they two had a moment to themselves in a quiet corner. “ She dressed me to enact old Nurse in the escape, and made pretense herself — thou hast seen — to be Anne Hutchinson. She will throw them off the track, so that they fail to follow. Ah, Diccon, thou couldst never have carried me away, brave as thou art, were it not for my clever aunt Oliver.”

Richard was too modest to quarrel with this assertion. Instead, he questioned the

girl minutely, though with ever waxing anger, as to the details of her cousin's persecution. He was infinitely relieved at the manner in which she received his answering information. It was no easy matter to tell one, who had sent for him in such utter faith, that he could not protect her himself. Nothing showed more finely the crystal clearness of her nature than that she thus responded: —

"I should despise thee if thou hadst not offered thyself, first of all, to serve Mistress Williams; and if thou hadst not seen from the beginning that my cheerful consent was thine."

Anne was right as to any pursuit, which was certainly diverted. They joined the Arrow at St. Mary's and sailed unmolested up the coast. One October day the little party entered the harbor of Manhattan. Dick gave himself so liberal a time allowance to cover all contingencies in his southern journey, he had been so blessed by good weather, and the capture of his prize was so soon accomplished, that he considered himself entitled to some days at Gravesend before that long period of inevitable separation.

He had business to transact at the fort, so he dispatched Goody Gray and the girl to

Lady Moody and proceeded about his affairs.

“What hath gone wrong, think you?” he asked of Jenkyns. “I meet naught except rebuffs and sour words on every side. The town is grown monstrous unfriendly of a sudden.”

“We saw it when we touched here,” said the mate, “on our way to Maryland. In this Babel of a colony every tongue should be spoke and comprehended. But an I forget my Dutch for a moment, lapsing into English, I have gapings for answer, and that ‘naught understand’ of theirs. It has all come to pass since my last visit to the fort. I think,” he lowered his voice cautiously, “it might be well if we finish our work here with all speed, and get us hence. I like not the look of things.”

Dick had never chafed under his father’s admonition to avoid useless dissension. All the fighting that even a more warlike soul could covet was near to seek in times like those. But now it was hard to accept Jenkyns’s warning. He said to himself, as he had said more than once since Anne sent him the golden arrow:—

“I am glad I had a glimpse, long ago, of

Father Jogues. The sight taught me that with a gallant spirit there is naught but can be borne."

Hastily concluding his affairs at Manhattan, he went on to Gravesend. Although they were prepared for it, Lady Deborah and her son looked distressed when he told them of the impression conveyed to him and his mate.

"Our worthy Director General Stuyvesant," said the young man, "hath subdued New Sweden" (on Delaware Bay). "Now his eyes are cast upon the Connecticut valley. He protesteth that the English encroach — and they do — upon the Dutch trading posts. We in New Netherland live in apprehension of war between these Hollanders and our own countrymen. 'T is a sore distress when the flag that protects one's home is not, after all, one's own. Such days as these bring that truth home to us."

"Ah well, we will hope," Dick comforted him, "that no worse days are to follow."

And the ill-will smouldered, though it did not burst into flame. Even peaceful Rhode Island was drawn into a dispute with New Netherland. Richard, however, for his personal part, found private matters too absorb-

ing to mix in politics. He took a brave leave of Anne, bade a grateful farewell to my lady, and the Arrow sailed on up the Sound, to the home he must not forsake again for many hardworking months.

In November Roger Williams departed for England. He had never been given the one hundred pounds voted to pay the expenses of his former journey, also taken solely in the interests of the colony. In the petitions that he set out upon this second expedition, there were fair offers to wipe out the debt and secure his present outlay. Neither was done. He must even sell his trading house to raise the passage money.

Dick sent out his little ship well laden, but he could not attend her himself, now, nor on several subsequent voyages. His first endeavor was to buy back Master Williams's business, to get it into his own hands. After much patient waiting, much hard and diligent toil, his hope became reality. He possessed the trading place, although only, so he promised himself, till his guardian should return. Then he would make over the gift and feel that he had after a fashion paid back the countless kindnesses received from that generous man.

Thus the time went on, full of healthful, hearty labor, not devoid of comfort, in the sight of Mistress Williams and her children secure from want, in the arrival, during his guardian's absence, of the Dyer family in Rhode Island, and pleasant intercourse with them, most of all in the love that lightened his future. Richard was busy, useful, and in general good spirits, through the period of Roger Williams's visit.

This stay abroad was characteristically marked by the endeavor of the colonial ambassador to further the readmission into Great Britain of the Jews. That people had been banished thence nearly four hundred years before. As the state which Williams had founded in America was the first to break down legal distinctions between Hebrew and Gentile, so here he strove to give them the charity which was his ideal of life.

One day in early summer Richard Markham was occupied in his trading house, with Providence Williams's aid, piling up pelts, sorting out barter, counting wampum by the yard, in the dark, close room behind the office. The boy was restless, that warm, bright day, requiring a sharp word, now and then, to keep his attention fixed on the dusty

skins, or the heaps of beads and blankets, away from the soft sunshine that lay without the open door.

A shadow darkened the entrance.

"Step out of the light," said Providence crossly.

He supposed one of the younger children had "come bothering," and spoke with the imperious manner of a lad in a position of some authority. The voice that answered was no child's:—

"Is it after such fashion you address your father?"

And the next moment, Roger Williams held his son in his arms.

He had arrived in New England at Boston, bringing with him a mandate issued by Oliver Cromwell's council, which granted him free use, henceforth, of Massachusetts ports. His home-coming was a boyishly arranged surprise. Joyful as it was, Dick wondered, looking about on the family group that night, if another soul there experienced his sense of thankful relief. He could not describe, without misunderstanding, the sensation. No one, no one, at least, but Anne, might know how, beyond the deep delight that now he was free to think of his own wishes again, there rolled

away from his shoulders the load he had manfully carried, the responsibility of his benefactors' family, for whom he must provide, while the utmost love on both sides could not make them his own.

Roger Williams was too utterly selfless not to, at once, take Dick's private good to heart. He hastened his ward's departure to New Netherland, urging that the marriage deferred through devotion to him should take place forthwith.

Dick's letter had prepared Anne for his coming. When he entered the great hall of the Gravesend house he saw her standing there, at the head of the stairs he had once defended. She was looking out for him.

Neither spoke. He was not conscious that either moved. And still they had met half way on the steps, and he held his love in his arms.

"At last, sweetheart!"

Anne replied to his impetuous cry. She was so sincere, so single-minded, that she could not conceal a thought for even the instant of reunion.

"Diccon, I have bad news for thee."

This was her greeting, while she plaited nervously the ruffle on his sleeve.

Dick set his lips together. He had been patient, very patient. But was he never to lead his own free life, never to hear good news?

"Of whom, dear?" he asked gently.

"Of my lady. She is very ill. I cannot — Oh, lad, I pray thee not to take it so! — I cannot leave her while she is ill."

It was true, of course. Such desertion would be as shameful return for her hospitality as if Richard had failed to respond to Roger Williams's need. He recognized the necessity with a sinking heart.

They brought cheerful faces, those two, into the sickroom. They made light, to Lady Deborah, of the hindrance her wasting disease must prove to any plans of theirs. Richard saw that this was no malady from which she could recover, nor even one where death would come as a swift relief. My lady was attacked by that dreadful consumption which ate the vitality, day by day, often for years of suffering.

"So long as she lives I must attend her," Anne urged when they were alone.

"Yes," Dick assented, though he did not return her gaze. "We will wait for each other, so long as my lady lives."

CHAPTER XXVI

FOR PARDON

“ AH, here you are, Mistress Williams ! I have sought everywhere for you.”

Dick Markham smiled on the pretty picture which saluted him when he opened the door.

Mother and daughter sat, side by side, at their spinning, and as the wheels revolved they sang, foot and hand keeping time to the psalm. The quaint dress, of cap and apron, bodice and scant skirt, the pleasant work and the gentle faces of the workers, all seemed parts of a harmony.

Mary Williams the younger looked brightly up at him : “ Thou hast somewhat to tell us, then ? Is Anne coming ? Can Lady Deborah leave home ? ”

This was a present day-dream — that my lady and her faithful companion should pay a visit to Wickford. But Richard had not found them to discuss that pleasing possibility. The older woman, from her sad experience, read his face correctly.

"'T is of death and disaster the lad would speak," she answered. "Out with it, Diccon. Do not delay."

"Dear madam, naught hath gone amiss with any of your household. This concerneth Mary Dyer."

The nervous stiffening of her features relaxed. Still she spoke in kind anxiety. "You mean her conversion to the faith of George Fox?"

"I mean she hath gone to Boston, whither Rob Gordon and his sister Jean are arrived."

The listening women broke into a cry of alarm.

"Boston, of all places!" the mother exclaimed.

"And Endicott, of all governors," the daughter added with a hysterical laugh.

"The question is," urged Dick, "what am I to do? Had I known in time I would have warned Robert how the Bay regardeth this man in the leathern doublet and all disciples of his. But her husband and her son could not hold back Mistress Dyer. She is bent on giving her testimony there."

"Let us consult Roger," said Mistress Williams, as she always said.

The President of the Providence planta-

tions never was so occupied with his own affairs that he had not ready sympathy for those in trouble. He advised that Dick write to Gordon, pointing out the risks that Mistress Malcolm ran (she, but not Robert, was a Friend) in making her home at Boston. He might further urge that they emigrate to Rhode Island. "And then thou hast done all in thy power," he concluded.

When the Quakers refused to leave Boston — indeed, they courted martyrdom — and Robert Gordon would not forsake his widowed sister, Dick lost heart in their affairs. For was not Anne coming to Wickford?

Then other absorbing interests arose. With the joy at sight of his love was mingled a tender solicitude for Lady's Moody's increasing weakness. The journey had been too much for her. Her days were numbered and the number was short.

It was of the invalid Dick thought when, one morning, he spied a familiar figure on the pier, watching for the Arrow as she came up the bay. He recognized Anne long before she was spied by Tom, his old ship boy, now promoted to Jenkyns's place.

"There is Mistress Hutchinson, sir," he cried. "She waves a kerchief, and she looks

in a monstrous hurry. How eager she is to see you."

"Very eager," Dick answered, his breath coming fast. "I trust naught hath gone wrong."

"We shall soon discover."

Tom called a direction to the boy he now ordered about, and a sailor attracted his master's attention for the moment. But Richard's thoughts all were with Anne and what her errand might be. He sprang ashore from the little boat and ran forward to meet her. Anne caught him by the arm, leading him one side, where they might talk in comparative privacy. Her first words were:—

"Thou must go to Boston, without a moment's delay."

"To Boston? Why?"

"Master Williams hath received word. They are about to hang Mary Dyer."

"Anne? What sayest thou?"

She had never heard so hard a tone from him before.

"'T is but the truth," she declared. "The poor soul is condemned to death. And thou, Dick, must to Boston and save the life of thy friend."

"But — sweetheart," he pleaded, "have

patience with my stupidity. Thou hast had time to think on these news. Remember they come suddenly to me. How shall Mistress Dyer be saved?"

"Ay, there was time for us to think — on everything the while thou wert sailing home. It seemed a hundred years to wait. Harken," she caught his doublet in her trembling fingers; "thou canst seek the governor and beg for thine old friend's life? Beg with thy whole heart?"

"In sooth, I will. And what then? Have not her goodman and her son asked the like ere this? Dost fancy, where they have failed, Endicott is one to be touched by mine entreaties, or the knowledge that she is friend to me?"

"If he is not, — for I, too, had my fears, — then, Dick," she faltered and refused to meet the steadfast look bent on her, "thou shalt demand Mary Dyer's freedom in return for — for what thou hast done for him."

"Anne!"

The shocked, incredulous voice cut down to her soul. But she kept her purpose. "For the life of one who hath stood by thee, love! Remember, 't is for her life. Thinkst thou it is sweeter for me to hint than for thee

to perform? And I always so proud of thee! But there is no other help, and thou canst not be consenting while they kill Mistress Dyer."

"Thou speakest truth," said Dick in a whisper. "At whatever cost to my pride, they shall not kill Mistress Dyer."

"Then, go. Go at once," pushing him away with both hands. "Lose not a moment more when each is made of gold."

He held her close for that last second.

"May God be with thee," she sighed against his cheek.

Dick answered with his sad smile: "And may He defend the weaker side."

He summoned Tom, ever his faithful slave, but did not wait for the others of his crew already dismissed. They two would take the Golden Arrow to Boston. He had won his mate's passionate gratitude by kindness to him as a ship boy, whom every one save the master kicked about and abused. It was a proud day for Thomas Grant, that on which he was thus singled out for special service. He felt more than repaid for the loss of his holiday by the confidence of his superior in regard to their errand's meaning while they sped on up the coast.

It was the first time Richard had visited

Boston since, a miserable little orphan, he left the town, under the ban, with Anne Hutchinson, the witch. Now Anne Hutchinson's daughter was his promised wife, and he a prosperous shipowner, returning in how different state from that of his departure.

"Yet then, as now, bowed 'neath the weight of others' misfortunes," he reflected on his way to the governor's house. "Then and now of the people accursed by man."

Anne bade him hasten, but he had no guide as to the time appointed for carrying out the sentence. He judged it would not be long delayed. Still, some way, he expected to be in season. Perhaps because he had only once — in the Maidenhead tavern — undergone so painful an interview as this must be with Endicott, he never imagined that it would not take place.

He was nearing the house. Suddenly a sight caught his eyes that transfixed them with horror. Richard stood, as if paralyzed. For a moment he could neither move nor speak.

A gallows was already erected. The crowd was collecting. He was so nearly — he might be now too late.

He broke into a run.

Yes, his Excellency was at home, he was

informed at the door. But unless the business was of urgent importance he could not be disturbed.

"It is most urgent," said Dick.

The mention of his name brought Endicott, without delay, to the waiting-room. "Ha, Markham," he exclaimed, stretching out both hands, "I never thought to be so glad to greet any of the Providence men. For the sake of the time you and your Golden Arrow rescued me, out here in the bay, you are ever welcome under my roof."

He spoke with a geniality not attributed to his character. Richard, for his part, stood, fingering his hat, with head drooped, a moody expression clouding his features.

"I confess," he answered huskily. "I never so little wished, sir, to see your face in my life. 'T was bitter hard to come hither to-day."

Endicott's mouth set into rigid lines. "That soundeth like the forerunner of some petition," he shrewdly observed.

"So it is."

"And the request?"

"Is no less than this, sir. I would have the pardon of Mistress Dyer."

Endicott started from his seat. "Man,

know you what you ask? She dieth within the hour."

Dick sprang towards him, as if he would grasp the word by brute force. "She must not die."

For a breathless second they stared into each other's eyes. Then Endicott haughtily threw back his head.

"Who saith 'must not' to the governor of Massachusetts Bay?"

Dick held his head as high.

"He who saved that governor's life."

Endicott flushed hotly, but his gaze was strangely questioning. "I knew not," he began in a strained voice, "that you set a price upon your good offices, Master Markham, or, long ago"—

"Nay, pardon, sir! Long ago I could not have been repaid. I never saw, till now, aught you could offer, in the world, that was worth what you call my price."

"And now?"

"The pardon for Mary Dyer: that will wipe out the score."

Endicott raised his eyebrows scornfully. "You flatter me. So a Quaker fanatic's life is the only one to fitly compare in value with that of the governor?"

“Not a Quaker fanatic in my sight: a woman who was like his mother to a lad without friends or money, thousands of miles from home. Master Endicott, I were unfit to speak with thee, or any decent man, did I not all in my power, even to reminding you of what happened once in Boston Bay, to save the life of Mary Dyer.”

The governor regarded him keenly. “You are right, Markham,” he said at length. “I know it by my memory of that debt I owe to you. I should act as you have done, were another man the governor and you in the plight of yonder Quaker.”

These words served to recall the present to him with its fast slipping time. He pulled his desk forward.

“We must make haste.”

“Then, sir, you will grant the pardon?”

“I will grant it on condition that she leave Boston forever.”

He wrote rapidly while Richard, other anxieties at an end, became overpowered by a fretfulness of hurry. He could not tell precisely how long this talk with his Excellency had lasted. Everything was done with a rush. They plunged from one sentence into another. Still an hour steals by, unobserved,

sometimes. When it meant everything earthly to one poor woman, what if that hour had gone?

He snatched the paper, scarcely waiting to thank its writer, and rushed headlong from the room. Endicott followed him to the door.

"Know you the way?" he asked.

Dick could not pause to explain. "I know," he called back. "If I can but reach the spot — in time."

The awful form of the gallows loomed up before him as he ran. It bore two dangling figures, the dead bodies of Mistress Dyer's companions. He heard the beat of the drum which drowned any last words of the departing soul. He saw the hangman stoop over a woman, who stood by him on the scaffold, and adjust a halter round her neck.

The throng pressed about Richard. He was hemmed in, so that he could not stir.

"Make way! Make way," he groaned.

His breath was gone. There was a ringing in his ears. He waved the paper above his head. With his dry lips he formed the one word: "Pardon."

The people near took up the cry: "A pardon! A pardon!"

Mary Dyer's executioner paused in his task. He had already pinioned her arms. He was drawing the black cap over her face.

Dick was pushed along to the foot of the steps. He handed the folded paper up to the man at the Quaker's side.

"The governor hath graciously pardoned Mary Dyer."

She heard Richard Markham's voice.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE WEAVER'S BUNDLE

THEN Dick saw that he stood next Mary Dyer's son by the steps of the scaffold. To him he imparted the governor's conditions.

"They are quite fair," was the other's observation.

No more was said, for, as Richard turned about in the crowd, he came upon a familiar face. It was so familiar that there was no sensation, in the first instant, of surprise. It was as if they had met on the day before. Dick stretched out his hand with a smile of greeting, before it all came back, with a rush, to him, — the time that had passed since he parted from Robert Gordon on shipboard at Newcastle.

Gordon also was too absorbed in the present for any salutation.

"Richard, thou hast helped Mary Dyer: help me," he gasped.

"My dear old Robin! And thou, too, art in trouble?"

The cautious Scotchman dragged him away from the throng where confidences might be overheard. They left behind them the gaping folk, pressing up to the scaffold, and the pardoned woman descending to meet her friends. When they were alone Robert leaned close to Dick and whispered :

“There is a warrant out for my sister, Diccon : for my poor Jean.”

Richard uttered an exclamation of horror. “Hath she been seized ?”

Gordon’s voice sank still lower : “I have hidden her.”

He walked on, at the corner leading his companion into a street which ran down to the water. “Come this way,” he said.

As they went on together Dick pursued his inquiries : “So all that hath saved the good wife from” —

His tone faltered. Robert took up the horrid sentence and finished it defiantly : “Ay, all that saved her from the pillory (’t was that at the very least) is they have made the search for Jean in vain. They believe her fled from the city with some few of the weaker brethren.”

“And why was she not among them ?”

“Solely because,” Robert answered, “we

could not get her away unseen. There, old friend, is where I beseech thy services."

Dick nodded. Until he had studied this problem he did not know what to say. It was a peculiarly unpleasant predicament. Although his boyish love of adventure returned to him at the notion of a rescue, on the other hand, how would it appear to Governor Endicott if the truth were known : that the favor he had granted was followed by the abduction of another Quaker ? He winced at the reflection on anything Endicott could deem mean and underhand. But after all this time the weaker side came very close to him. At any cost, for Gordon's sake and her own, he must contrive to aid Jean Malcolm.

By now they were following the bay shore. Presently they came to a tiny log house, one of several which Dick remembered from his boyhood in Boston.

"That is my home," Robert observed in passing. He led the way through a small, cultivated garden to the building at the back of the lot. "And this is my workroom," he added.

Gazing anxiously all about him, he drew a key from his pocket, unlocked the door and motioned his friend to enter.

They went into a long, narrow room, littered by bales of some sort of manufacture. In the dim light which crept through chinks in the shuttered windows it was difficult, had one chanced to be curious, to see what were the contents of the place. But Robert did not linger here. He crossed the floor, ran his hand along the rude wainscoting, and, after a little fumbling, apparently touched a spring. It slid back.

Dick recognized the woman with the serious sweet smile who stepped forward from her hiding-place. The narrow recess revealed its cobwebs and its dusty gloom at her back.

"This is never Richard Markham," she cried in amazement.

While Robert explained the situation to her, Dick stood deep in meditation. He broke in upon them abruptly.

"What is your trade, Robin?"

Gordon opened his gray eyes very wide. "I am a weaver," he answered rather coldly. "You must remember that of old."

"I did remember. These bales of goods about me recalled it to my mind. They are cloths thou hast woven?"

The brother and sister exchanged uneasy glances. Was their guest out of his mind

that he wasted time on these irrelevancies? Or was it rather that he adopted this harsh manner of showing them that he avoided even conversation concerning Goodwife Malcolm's escape? Would he have nothing whatever to do with the matter?

"All cloths of my weaving," said Gordon, still more stiffly. He should not ask again for assistance. But who could have thought Dick Markham would change to — this?

"Have you children, mistress?" was the next query.

"I have a son," Jean Malcolm's clear voice held a significant note of indignation; "a boy not three years old."

Dick gave her a bright smile. "And where is he?"

"With a neighbor of the faith," Robert volunteered. "She dwells but a few doors away."

"You would that he accompany your flight? And this neighbor, with Mistress Dyer, perhaps?"

At that hope sprang again for his listeners. "Oh, Dick, thou wilt help us?"

Every vestige of Robert's pride vanished in the sensation of relief.

Dick looked at him in bewilderment. "Why else am I here?" he demanded.

Thereupon he proceeded to outline his plan. As he had seen in entering, the work-room lay upon the very banks of the bay. He could bring the Golden Arrow up that night, and drop anchor not far from shore. There were several such small craft here and there in the harbor. Of itself it would not attract attention. But these other boats contained observers; they must wait until it was quite dark. Then Robert should convey his nephew, his neighbor, and the Dyers, out to Richard's ship. There would be nothing noteworthy in all that. With them should go some household belongings: "And one of them," Dick continued impressively, "shall be a roll of cloth."

The others returned blank faces to his joyous look.

"Well?" Robert hinted.

"Rolled up inside that bale we shall hide your sister."

"Oh, Diccon, now I see! And thou, Jean? 'T is all plain. Thou art saved, dear heart. I knew it so soon as I spied Dick Markham in the throng to-day."

"Come, come, Gordon," Richard hastened to set forth. "Much still remains to be accomplished. You must not forget the slips

there may be 'twixt cup and lip. Nor should we lose further time."

"Shall I hide me again?" asked Jean. "When I am required, thou wilt apprise me, Robin?"

"That is best," Dick assented. "Shut her safe away. Then go to the other Friends, and see if they will be of our party. In any event, secure the child. Meanwhile I will visit the Golden Arrow, order her sent hither, and convey the house furnishing to the wharf."

Secretly Dick was not sorry, on Gordon's return with his nephew, to learn that the Dyers were already fled, and the other Quakers, to whom the opportunity had been offered, refused to escape. There is no denying that many of the Boston Friends were willful in their insistence upon "testifying" in that particular spot, nor that certain of their words and deeds were such as no community, even now, would tolerate. Mary Dyer, herself, returned in the following spring, refused the same conditions once more extended, and was hanged. No one could save her then.

This contumacy in the one instance served Richard Markham's purpose. He would not

refuse to aid any who needed him, but every additional passenger on the Golden Arrow contributed towards the chances of discovery.

The obedient little boy was sent on ship-board with the first load of chairs and tables carried from the dismantled home. Robert left the key with another neighbor, not a Friend, to whose care he consigned such work as he must leave behind.

"I depart this night for the southward," he explained. "There is opportunity there to better my fortunes, which have been grievous of late. I quit Boston town right gladly."

"Small wonder, Goodman Gordon," was the kindly woman's comment. "I have felt for you more than I dared to show. 'T is shameful that one who is no Quaker, more than I, or his Excellency himself, should suffer as if he were a heathen man."

Robert drew himself up haughtily. "So far as that goes," he observed, "I am content to be classed with a saint like my sister. Good-day to you, Mistress Reed."

She stood in her doorway, following his movements with her gaze, for the benefit of her family. "Though he try to be mighty secret, yet I guess whither he is bound. Word hath come, belike, from Goody Mal-

colm, and he is about to join her. Ah, well, they were ever close-mouthed, but clever folk whom I bear no ill will. Good go with them, say I."

Good did go with them. The stars were shining when Richard brought back the little skiff for its last load — that precious freight! Robert leaned over the pier edge. Dick stood up in the boat, which he had fastened securely at bow and stern by ropes he flung ashore. Between them they lifted the great roll of cloth that lay beside Gordon on the wharf. They steadied it in their arms. Dick lowered it gently to the bottom of the boat.

"Cast us loose, Gordon," he whispered, "and jump in. Now," as the other sprang lightly to the seat at the rudder, "do thou mind the helm while I row faster than this water ever yet was crossed."

He was nervous and spoke breathlessly. Still he felt the old sense of elation, the subtle delight of danger, the uplifting joy that cannot be described, which belongs to stress upon the weaker side.

Their boat flew across the line the moon made on the water. It hastened into the shadow again.

"Who goes there?" A call came out of the darkness.

Another boat shot into the light, pulling close to that in which the fugitives sat. Gordon gave a groan in his throat.

"Who goes there? 'T is an officer of the law who asks."

"And what," said Dick quickly, "hath an officer of the law to do with the master of the Golden Arrow, lying yonder and about to return to Providence?"

"That all may be," quoth the dark figure, still keeping a firm grasp upon the bow of their boat. "But the master of the Golden Arrow is not all. Who and what have you here?"

"The household effects and the person of one Robert Gordon. He is about to sail with me for the south."

"Robert Gordon? The brother of the Quaker Jean Malcolm?"

Dick gestured silence to his indignant comrade. "Goodman Gordon is not a Friend."

"I know. And yet I shall take on myself to ask him to go back to shore with me."

Gordon made a hasty motion as if he would spring at the man. Again Richard restrained him.

"What if he will not?" he inquired desperately.

"I should call for my mates." He held up his whistle. "We could soon convince you that resistance were of no avail."

In this extremity, Dick played his last card. "Shall you bring us before the governor?" he asked. "I have been there once to-day."

"Indeed?" said the officer carelessly.

Richard leaned from his seat to catch the other's eye. "Even so, when I sought, and obtained the release of Mistress Mary Dyer."

"Whew!" The officer drew a long breath. "Are you that man? If so, what is your name?"

Dick understood the motive of this inquiry. Doubtless he had been much talked of, during the day, and his identity established.

"I am Richard Markham, of Providence," he said glibly. "And there," he pointed towards it, "is my ship, the Golden Arrow."

The constable raised his voice: —

"Ship ahoy. What name and owner?"

Tom stood at the stern, little Angus Malcolm by his side. He was watching the conference solicitously from afar. In his idea of assistance he did the worst possible thing.

"None of your business," he called back.

"Tut, tut, Grant," Dick's shout admonished him. "Keep a civil tongue in thy

head. Answer the officer at once and truthfully."

"The Golden Arrow of Providence, Master Richard Markham," came the instant response.

The officer was a simple fellow. This served to convince him.

"Go your way in peace," he exclaimed, loosening his hold on the boat. "I shall watch you aboard your vessel. Then are you quit of me."

"Thank Heaven for that," Rob Gordon muttered.

It was not an easy task to lift the roll of cloth, so carefully as it must be raised, with that other boat lying near at hand and suspicious glances following every movement. But, after all, the officer was dull. He shared the general conviction that Jean Malcolm had fled with the other Friends. He supposed, as the inquisitive Mistress Reed had done, her brother was about to join her.

"And well rid of them both," he mused, while the Golden Arrow's anchor ran slowly up to the deck. "A very good riddance to Massachusetts Bay. Farewell, Goodman Gordon, and you the governor's friend."

CHAPTER XXVIII

AGAIN THE GOLDEN ARROW

"It is time for our visit to Squaw Ledge," Richard Markham said to his friend Gordon.

"I am always ready," Robert answered. "The life in the woods is as new to me as it was familiar to thy boyhood. Yet it grows dearer with every trial. I find that it would be easy for me to become a savage."

"Poor old Rob," the shipowner mused as he left the humble shop. "That work is beneath his powers. Small marvel if he is glad each year to set it aside for a time. I must endeavor in earnest to find something the better worth his doing."

He dwelt upon this matter during the days to come, reproach pricking on his former inaction. "Is it that I grow careless of others' suffering, in my own prosperity?" he asked himself.

For happiness had fallen into his arms at last, although no one else would say that Richard Markham became thereby selfishly

contented. In the town of Providence he was counted an open-hearted philanthropist. The friendship between the rich trader and Gordon the weaver was cited as an instance of his humble mind. Robert and Jean Malcolm could have told how many kindnesses marked that intercourse. Naturally his marriage, following closely upon Lady Moody's death, had made great changes in Dick's life. The handsome house, one of the town's show places, held his heart, in the baby tyrannized over by old Nurse Gray and in the wife who was light of its master's eyes. The question repeated by his awakened conscience ran, was all his thought given to this dear home? Had he ceased to consider so deeply as of old the less fortunate?

At least he did not forget this new resolve concerning Robert's affairs. During the first week of their yearly visit to camp, a birch hut the two men had built for themselves in the northern woods, he sounded Gordon as to a change of business. In the intervals between trapping, hunting, and fishing which filled those happy days, they arrived at certain conclusions. Richard could give employment to a bookkeeper in the great warehouse down by the wharves. If the sort of toil would suit

Robert better than weaving (it was certainly more lucrative) the place was at his disposal.

"You have been a never-failing friend, Dick," said the Scotchman gratefully.

Richard stood baiting his hook by the stream whence they were drawing trout almost too fast to call it sport. "I wish I could believe you," he answered slowly. "Of late I have asked myself, was I not growing self-centred, and a little hard. 'T is not a pleasant thought."

"And is false," Robert retorted. He waded out into the stream tossing back the next sentence over his shoulder: "Should occasion serve, thou art as ready as of old to do all in thy power for the poor. But these are quiet times under the good Protector Cromwell, and more tolerant hereabouts. Too, thou art come to a quieter stage in life. That is all, believe me."

Dick shook his head unconvinced. After his companion had left him alone he walked up and down beneath a giant pine-tree, his mind revolving the thoughts their conversation had roused, his memory going over much that it had started into life.

"How seldom now," he accused himself, "do I recall the promise to champion the weak,

though never yet, thank God, have I set it at naught. How stubbornly I put away the stinging remembrance that wrapped about my pledge. All thought of my father's letter has long been buried deep down in my heart. Did I bury with it the other word I passed, that which was part of my mission in the world?"

It was the question already become familiar through constant repetition in the past few weeks. His pondering was interrupted by a peculiar sound.

Some one was approaching along the trail. This was unusual, since they were far from any dwellings save a cluster of Indian lodges whose inhabitants had another road. However, Dick was not alarmed. He supposed the footsteps must be those of a savage visitor to Squaw Ledge, and, although there was recent trouble with the natives, even threatening war, no personal danger ever menaced any member of Roger Williams's family. He sprang up the bank to intercept the man.

"I must tell him," he concluded, "that the Ledge is deserted until night. 'T were pity should he journey so far and find his hosts from home."

But this was no Indian he saw. A white

man was hastening along the illy broken track, a man in rough dress, whose figure had something about it by which Dick recognized him, at that distance, as a lowly inhabitant of Providence.

His first consideration was that here were tidings sent after him or Robert. He was about to raise his voice for a call when another, a slighter disturbance, caused him to hesitate. He glanced upward.

Along a straight, level branch of the great pine-tree stretched the lithe body of a catamount. Its eyes were set upon the traveler's back. Its straining body was poised ready for a spring.

Like a flash Dick swung the bow dangling at his side to its position. He pulled an arrow from the quiver. He took steady aim at the gleaming eyeballs.

There was a hideous screech, like the wailing of a child. The art, acquired in his boyhood among the Indians, had not deserted him. His missile sank through the eye to the brain. The quivering animal fell heavily to the ground.

Meanwhile the man trudging on ahead had been regardless of danger. The swish of the arrow's flight was the first noise which met

his ears. A pioneer was ever on the alert for that sound of all others. He threw himself forward flat upon the ground.

Dick's running footfall did not reassure him. He lay motionless as if shot, deeming this ruse the only defense left to him. He was roused by the shout Rob Gordon raised in the distance.

"Diccon, did I hear a panther's cry? Have you shot?"

"An English voice," thought the man, emboldened at once. By the time Richard reached him he was scrambling to his feet. Robert was to be heard clambering up the bank.

"Ah, it is Master Markham," exclaimed the fellow. "Then 't was you who killed the beast?"

"Never mind the beast. Art thou come in quest of me?"

He nodded. Richard, his muscles twitching, his breath catching in his throat, saw him deliberately loosen his doublet, take from thence a knotted kerchief, and shake its folds apart.

Out dropped a golden arrow.

Dick sprang forward to seize it, uttering a shriek: "Whence had you this?"

"Sir, have patience," the messenger enjoined. "I will tell it all in order. But you must hearken quietly, or I cannot collect my wits."

"Yes, lad," urged Robert, as if they were boys again. "Possess thy soul in peace, else canst thou drag nothing forth." He looked nervously from the man's dull visage to Richard's burning cheek and his eye's unnatural shimmer. "Now, speak thou!"

"Two days past—I mean two nights past," the droning tones began, "I walked by the Markham house, about ten o' the clock. I was on my way home from the tavern. As I turned the corner a window to the left, on the ground floor, was raised. You remember the window I mean?"

He addressed Richard. "'Tis the window of my office."

"A voice said very low, 'Thou art Jedediah Samson, art thou not?' I answered yes, for it was true. That is my name. After that this kerchief, tied as you have seen, dropped down to me. The voice went on: 'And an honest fellow, so men say. Bear this to Richard Markham at Squaw Ledge. Dost know the place?' I said 'yes' again. The voice bade me: 'Take my kerchief thither

and rest not nor delay. Come to this house, on thy return, and I will pay thee — in gold, man — for thy pains. But thou must carry word, as well, to Richard Markham.’ ”

Dick bent forward, speaking hurriedly: “What was the word?”

Jedediah Samson fixed his foolish gaze on the speaker’s features. In a singsong tone, as of one repeating by rote, he said what Dick and Gordon believed was the precise form in which the message had come to him: —

“‘Tell him to hasten home, in secret and at once, leaving Robert at the camp. Do thou keep this errand to thyself.’ And here I am.”

Richard whirled about in the path. “I must start this instant.”

Gordon threw himself before him. “I am not sure,” he said, “that thou shouldst go at all.”

“Not go?” Dick glared at him. “Why, man, can you not see? The word is from Anne. She is in some direful plight. I shall neither eat nor sleep till I have reached her side.”

Robert’s canny forethought was not prepared to admit this assumption. “I fear it is a trap,” he suggested.

“How so?”

"The secrecy, the form of the summons, the luring you back alone. Why, you might be met by a murderer, man, and no one ever tell what had become of your body."

"I have no enemy," Dick protested.

"Where is the soul can boast so far as that? You mean you know of none. Was the voice a woman's, art sure?" he questioned; although he added, aside to Dick, "Yet even that might be disguised."

"'T was a soft woman's voice."

Suddenly Richard remembered what must decide the whole: "This token!" He held up the arrow. "No one but Anne would use it to call me back."

"Might it be stolen, and so employed? Nay, look not so savage, Diccon. 'T is naught save love for thee that brings up all these fears."

"I know; I know. I shall be thankful for them—but not now! Robert, there's not a soul on earth could comprehend the meaning of this ornament between my wife and me. No one else would ever think to send it thus. From Anne, alone, it saith, 'Thou will come to me.' And she had the wit to employ it and so show her messenger's good faith."

Gordon was tardily convinced. Conviction rendered him as furiously in haste, as anxious as his friend. He made every arrangement for Richard's departure, keeping Samson with him for needed rest. Dick was speeded upon his journey before an hour was over.

The two days' travel was pursued in a maze of distressing uncertainty, Richard calling up one dear name after another about which his worries might cluster. He and Robert had agreed that the probabilities were Roger Williams required the good offices of his ward. It seemed far likelier that the minister, always in some sort of political or religious dispute, should have done himself irretrievable harm by his persistent clamor for equal rights, than that the peaceable ship-owner, or his popular family, could need such mysterious righting of a wrong.

Now he would know ! This was Richard's upmost thought when he reached the town and strode along its silent streets, wrapped in the desolation of night. He saw his home loom up before him. What shadow lay across its threshold, from which Anne called to him ? The fanlight over the entrance, the crescents cut in the blank shutters alone betrayed any light within the house. He glanced along

its dark surface and turned the corner as Jedediah Samson had done.

There was the window which had been raised. Those blinds, too, were fast. But here was the door so often used by the master of the house. It was locked, since it opened directly from the street. Dick's duplicate key was in his pocket. He had it out in a moment; the next, and he crossed the threshold.

He moved softly, for he did not forget Anne's injunction — the strangest part of the entire proceeding — to secrecy. He stole quietly into the room.

Anne must have been awaiting him. She must have counted the hours till her husband could bring his answer to her demand. She ran towards him, out of the dark, and threw herself upon his breast.

"Oh, thou dear, dear lad," she sobbed. "I knew that thou wouldst come."

He soothed her for a little, smoothing her hair and stroking her cheek with infinite tenderness. He perceived that she was completely unnerved. She could not tell him anything until the sense of his presence had restored her self-possession. It was evident she had been under some terrible strain.

“Now, love,” he coaxed her at length.

“Oh, Dick, it was so horrible — without thee!”

She clung by both hands to him.

“Yes, sweet, yes. Is it — not our child, nor aught that hath happened to thee?”

“Nothing to any one in this house, Dickon.”

“Thank God! Then — Master Williams, perhaps?”

He imagined he could thus persuade the hateful story from her. To his surprise Anne pulled herself away. She stood out, free from his arms, looking curiously at him.

“’T is no one whom thou hast ever seen.”

CHAPTER XXIX

HELP

DICK showed his immense relief. "Ah, well," said he. "I know thy tender heart for all in misery. But, dear love, if they are no friends, why suffer thus for their sake."

Still Anne regarded him with that strange, troubled expression.

"Thou dost not comprehend. They are hunted men, fleeing for their lives."

"And how came such to my wife?"

"They came to thee. Master Williams knew not thou wert abroad and brought them thither. 'T was his intention that thou hide them at Squaw Ledge. So I locked them away in the guest-chamber." Both smiled, in the midst of their distraction, at the notion of Anne as jailer. "And I sent straightway for thee."

They looked intently into each others' eyes. "There is something behind all this," said Richard.

Anne's breath came quicker. "I am afraid

— I was about to tell thee — Dick, these men are regicides.”

Her husband threw himself into his great armchair. “ ’T is a perfect mizmaze,” he declared, holding his head in his hands. “ Who are the regicides ? Come hither, Nan, and tell me the story from first to last.”

Anne crossed over to him. She leaned against his shoulder, as she stood, head bent, nervously curling over her fingers a long lock of his hair. For Richard was not even literally a Roundhead.

“ I guessed thou wouldst not receive them the more kindly for their deed,” at length she faltered out. “ It seems — such are the news they bring — the Stuarts have been restored to the English throne again. Charles the Second is avenging his father’s death right cruelly. These fugitives were among the judges who condemned the unhappy king. They fled to America to escape a horrible punishment. Oh, Diccon, thou shouldst see how haggard and worn they look ! ”

He shook his head at her cajoling. His face had grown suddenly stern. “ I wonder,” he reflected, his gaze bent on the ground, his tone slow and thoughtful, “ why, apart from its legality, which was ever a question, that

condemnation of Charles Stuart groweth daily more abhorrent to my mind."

"Because," Anne suggested, busily twining the lovelock over his forehead, "thou canst not forget the piteous sight of his Majesty, insulted in the Newcastle church. And — because thou hast helped, after a fashion, his son to escape his captors. Is it not so?"

Richard laughed outright at this characteristic logic. "Nay, though I had a certain respect for Charles ever after he refused to barter his Church for his crown. But those reasons thou hast given were the prejudices of a hotheaded boy: these that I feel are the convictions of a man. I have never taken them out to examine them before. I must see upon what they are founded."

He spoke half to himself. Anne, eager advocate for the unfortunates hidden away upstairs, persisted in her theorizing: "Perhaps on the tales I told thee from the Maryland Royalists. How despitefully he was entreated; how soldiers spat upon him, and his judges raised an uproar when he would defend himself."

"Once more, love! That were pity, and not an argument."

Anne's figure drooped, abashed by the re-

membrance that such facts were sufficient to move herself. "Well, then, thou hast no reason," she announced triumphantly.

"Ah, but I have, and here it is." Dick's expression lightened, as the truth became clear before him: "I could not so long be pupil to one who taught every right to every man without seeing all around a fact. I am grown convinced that the bishops, whom we used to berate, with Charles the First behind them, were the creatures of their times, precisely as were Winthrop and Cotton and — and as Endicott is now. The times teach that toleration means indifference. When they possessed the power Laud and the king harassed Puritans, who, when their turn came, killed both Laud and the king. Aside from his notions of state-craft — which were, also, the teachings he had learned — Charles Stuart suffered at the hands of men of his own school. The times made him and them exactly what they were."

"Then, dear Richard," Anne pleaded timidly, "why blame those judges that they were no wiser than all the rest of the world?"

Dick looked up quickly. "True, love. That is the weak point in mine argument. It betrayeth my lack of charity. Why, indeed?"

Anne went on winding the wavy tress about

her forefinger. "Of old I thought, with thee," she mused. "Not for such reasoning, but to the same result. Oh, how I hated the men who persecuted our king!"

"I remember." Dick smiled, and clasped his wife the closer for her tender vehemence.

"Yet, when Master Williams came to me," the soft voice continued — "'t was Tuesday evening, and I was in the nursery with little Ned — when the good man said what he wished me to do, and yet what they had done — why, I shrank away, and told him this was not the house to harbor such folk as these."

"What answer made he?" asked Richard, still amused.

"He told me to come and see them. That was all. I went with him, here, to thine office. On the floor lay one man, unconscious. His companion was bent above him, his face as white and pinched as that of him who had fainted. Both were ragged, their shoes dropping from them. There was blood oozing from the foot of him who had swooned. The other looked up at me, as I entered, and his eyes — they were like those, Diccon, of the fox you trapped and kept in the garden. It made my heart sicken, to see that hunted gleam in his eyes."

Richard drew her head down to him till it rested against his cheek. "I know what you did and said."

"What, pray?"

"You ran forward, fell on your knees, and cried out: 'Oh, poor man, what can I do for him?' And, with that, you tended the bleeding foot, ere you uttered another word."

Anne pinched his ear. "How clever my goodman is. For it was thus I acted. I forgot all else in the sight of their miserable estate. And thou wilt do the like, I know."

Her assertion recalled the thoughts with which his mind had been occupied of late. He sprang from his seat. Here, again, was the weaker side.

"I will do the like, now thou hast told me of it," said he. "Lead thou to these men."

Anne turned gladly to leave the room.

"The one is in bed, with his bruised foot," she exclaimed. "I told him to rest it while he might. And I brought some healing lotion of Nurse Gray's, with which to bathe it. 'T is better now."

"But may prove serious hindrance," Dick mused, his brow creased with a perplexed frown, as he followed his wife up the stairs. "How shall we convey a lame man secretly

along the unbroken road to the camp? I must further consider the matter."

He was still pondering it when they reached the guest-chamber, and Anne selected a key from the cluster at her girdle. "Speak very soft now," she murmured. "None in the house, save thou and I, knows that they are hidden here."

They moved the door quietly, stepping inside.

A shaded candle burned beside the couch. At the stand sat a careworn old man, in clothes Richard recognized as formerly belonging to himself. He was reading a leather-bound pocket Bible, but laid it on the table, at their entrance, and arose. There was that expression, among his wrinkles, which Anne had tried to describe—the look of a creature brought to bay. Dick's heart, too, ached at the sight of it.

"Surely," said a hoarse voice, "'t is a friend who accompanies our good hostess. She hath earned all trust in her. Your husband, madam, perhaps?"

Anne assented, with the pride she always betrayed in that statement. "I cannot make you acquainted,"—she smiled faintly,—“for Master Williams told me 't were better these

visitors should not learn our names, nor we theirs. Then would there be naught to answer, were either party questioned concerning what we had done."

"That was like his prudent care for us," observed Roger Williams's old ward gratefully. "And, sir," to his guest, "for mine own part, I think it were wise to remove you hence to a more secluded place. I would convey you at once away from prying eyes and wagging tongues. Yet how to do it with your friend gone lame?"

"My son-in-law (he is my son-in-law) can speak for himself," said the other. Dick fancied that the tone was colder than at first. "He is awake," drawing aside the curtain of the bed.

In the shadow of the hangings Richard saw a face white as the linen against which it lay, a long, thin hand stretched stiffly on the outside of the coverlet. It was not to the invalid that his companion's voice had hardened, for he bent solicitously to administer a sip of water. No, it was the host on whom he turned.

"Sir, elsewhere we have gone, in New England, our welcome hath been as to martyrs persecuted for righteousness' sake. You are

the first of whom we must beg protection, who hath offered it with so cold a mien. Were you, perhaps, a Cavalier?"

He put the query in something like apprehension. With their lives at stake they could not have utter faith in any man. More than wounded pride forced him to make sure.

Richard understood him too well to resent the suspicion. "An I must speak truly," he answered, "what I do for you is hardly because you are martyrs in my eyes. Without being a Cavalier, I never upheld the men who sentenced their king to death. Not for that, but since you are threatened with the like fate, I offer my services. Still, I am ready to swear on the Book" — he glanced towards the Bible at the bedside — "that I shall not fail in honesty to you both."

The regicide looked uneasily towards his son: "Shall we put confidence in him?"

Anne sprang indignantly forward. "Why, you bad men," she stammered, "who is there could doubt my husband? His word is as good as another's bond. They will tell you so everywhere."

"Hush, dear," Dick interrupted, laughing — even the regicide smiled. "They are very right to be cautious. But, sir, if you believe

in Roger Williams, surely you must feel that he could not have led you into a snare by bringing you to my house?"

"He speaketh sooth," came in a faint whisper from the couch. The father bent over his companion, while they conferred together in an agitated undertone.

Then he raised his head, addressing Richard: "I beg your pardon for the hesitancy. We are willing to place our safety in your hands."

"Would they were more efficient," Dick retorted. "Your son is still unable to walk?"

"Oh, he hath improved," Anne broke in, "greatly improved since Tuesday night. You see, then, he had been using his poor foot all day long."

"And yet it hath not healed?" Dick still spoke to the one who acted as nurse. "Could he bear his weight upon it?"

"We tried, this morning. 'Twas impossible, with my aid, for him to hobble across the room. As your sweet wife has said, the hurt was shamefully misused in the journey to this house."

"I suppose so." Dick advanced to the bed. "I am loath to disturb you, sir," — now he conversed directly with the sick

man, — “but I fear I must ask to inspect your injury for myself.”

The invalid endeavored to pull himself up on the bolster. His father stooped over him again, lifting him deftly into place. When he thus seemed prepared for visitors, Anne picked up the candle, setting it at the foot of the couch. She withdrew the shade. For the first time its light fell full on the fugitive's face.

Richard, too, was within its circle. The man in the bed looked up at him. He gazed down on the guest whom his roof sheltered.

His voice had changed, in the years that lay between them, from its boyish uncertainty to a manly depth of tone. It had told this other nothing. Now, host and visitor, they stared straight into each other's eyes.

Dick stepped back to the side of his wife.

“The gentleman and I have met before,” said he.

“Love! What is the matter?”

“Nothing, Anne, save this. The gentleman is General William Goffe.”

CHAPTER XXX

THE PROMISE KEPT

“CHRIST help me,” Richard Markham cried. “How it all comes back again!”

With the instinct of motherly protection natural to such women, Anne flung both arms across his shoulders, as if to shield him from the torturing memory that meeting had evoked.

Her clasp could not shut out the picture. He saw once more the low, black timbered room at Maidenhead. He saw the merciless men, the grinning lips of George Jekyll, the disdain with which Goffe put from him any notion of a benefit conferred by Edgar Markham’s son. And this was the man, this enemy to the good name of his father, this public defamer of himself, for whom he was called upon to risk everything he held dear — his wealth and his position, the safety of wife and child.

Sunk in his bitter revery Dick paid no heed to the regicide. It was Anne who was touched

by that most pitiable of all sounds, the sobs of a strong man. She glanced towards the couch. Her new horror of its occupant fled before the forlorn figure which hid a ghastly face in two shaking hands. The third man stood, motionless with surprise, between the bed and the young couple.

It was Anne, in her blessed narrowness of vision which did not allow of any subtle side issues, who, Richard always thankfully declared, saved him from lifelong remorse. She ran up to Goffe.

"Be calm," her gentle tone commanded, as if she spoke to baby Edgar. "'Tis harder still for you than for Richard. Of course we can see that. But — be quiet, Master Goffe, and hearken to what I say. Here is the rare opportunity my husband craved, that his father craved for him. If you will but humble yourself to accept what Richard gives, you pardon the dead man, in his grave, and you — and my dear — are thus permitted to wipe out the past together."

His hands had fallen at his side. He looked up into her earnest face, humbly, as if he were, indeed her little child.

"You speak, mistress," he said in a shaken voice, "as if this were — a privilege to me."

She affected to disregard the hardness of his manner. "Is it not a divine privilege, to fully forgive?" she asked.

Her husband came over to where she stood. He gazed down once more at the shrunken features in the curtains' shadow. There was no longer that blaze in his eyes before which the regicide had felt as if his very soul were shriveled. He was calm and purposeful again.

"Ay, sir," he began steadily enough, "my wife hath the right of it. This is not only my chance but yours. Shall we two improve it together?"

For a long moment they regarded each other steadily. A last sob quivered up from the sick man's breast. Richard's under lip was well-nigh bitten through in that fierce set of his mouth. Slowly, not relaxing the encounter of their eyes, William Goffe lifted his limp hands and held them out to Dick.

The master of the house took them in his firm grasp. He turned to the curious bystander.

"Ye were ancient enemies?" asked General Whalley.

Dick shrugged his shoulders. "Have you doubt, despite that also, that you are safe in my care?"

"I have no doubt at all," the old soldier answered promptly.

Like most men, Richard hastened away from sentiment to action. "What now?" he said. "We must move at once. Shall you and I, sir, devise some plan for the carriage of your son?"

The Roundhead was resourceful and energetic. He launched into a volume of questions in regard to ways and means. How far was the camp; what sort of path led to it; what roads were there, from which to choose, in stealing out of town? He drew Richard one side to confer with him, while Anne, in her mild, decisive manner, bathed and bandaged the wounded foot. That done, she prepared to leave them, her husband giving directions that she might carry out. Goffe had not once spoken since his passionate outburst, but his gaze rested upon the ministering woman with so reverent a devotion that Richard, watching the two from a little distance, felt something like friendliness for the man. After all, his father's foe had a soul to appreciate Anne Markham.

"I will fetch whatsoe'er you desire to the threshold, Diccon," she said. "Sir," with a curtsy to Whalley, "may good fortune attend you., Farewell."

Though bred in a school that scorned such forms, he returned her salutation with equal politeness.

“And, madam, I thank you for your hospitality, with all my heart and soul.”

She looked towards the bed. But, before she could make obeisance there, one long arm reached out to her. William Goffe caught her hand in his and carried it to his lips. He looked across at Richard.

“Thank God, each day — yet I know you do — that He hath given you this wife.”

Richard bowed for them both. Anne, overcome by the praise, blushing furiously, fled, like a schoolgirl, from the room.

They assisted Goffe to rise and to don his clothes. By the time Dick heard Anne’s signal at the door the sick man was ready for his part of the expedition. They found ropes and a piece of canvas upon the sill. From these they constructed a sort of litter in which the lame man could be seated. Then Richard went down the passage, and peered over the balusters, to be sure all was safe. He came back to the others he and Whalley lifted the burden between them, and it was borne out into the hall.

“My wife will make all secure after us,” he explained.

Down the stairs they stepped, softly as was possible, thus encumbered. Dick advised his fellow-bearer of various turns and stops until they arrived at the office door. Here they passed out into the night.

It was starless, moonless, utterly black. From his knowledge of the town, Richard was enabled to elude the watch once or twice, to take advantage of a friendly doorway's shadow, when a belated traveler strolled past. And, in the slow course of time, the streets of Providence had led them out, away from signs of habitation, into the close encircling woods. In that new country the forest was never far to seek. When its grateful gloom received them they set down the litter under an oak-tree, and threw themselves upon the ground to rest.

"We have many miles before us," Richard warned his companions. "We cannot waste much time."

Whalley would gladly have improved this breathing spell by solving the mystery of his companions' previous intercourse. In the dark, to which their sight had become accustomed, he glanced at his son-in-law.

"Have you, perchance, a mouthful of brandy for our friend here?" he inquired.

Both understood his curious emphasis upon the closing words. They were, however, too absorbed in each other to enter into explanations now. William Goffe peered wistfully into the grave face bent above him while Richard poured out the draught.

"I said," he abruptly announced, "that I would rather die than take help from your hands. I said it that day at Maidenhead. But see how sweet life is! I choose your good offices the rather than death, after all."

Whalley leaned forward to catch this speech. Dick smiled to himself at the inward question what he made out of it.

"I hope it was not alone as a desperate resort," his gentle answer came. "Perhaps you considered me, no less, and my dear father's letter."

"You are pleased to put it so."

"I judge you by myself," Dick urged. "I declared — do you remember? — that I would rather die than offer you such aid. And now I find it sweet, not bitter, to work for you. But then," he paused for a moment, and went on in a different tone. "After all, my wife spoke truth: 't is not only more blessed, it is easier to give than to receive."

Goffe drew a heavy sigh. "I will try to accept in a thankful spirit."

"Then, sir, you are a hero," was Richard's instant reply.

That night and the one which followed they spent in the woods. They utilized every moment they could extort from rest, every particle of strength that they could give, in pressing on ahead. At sunrise, on the morning of the third day, they came to the hunters' camp.

Here Gordon met them. Richard led him aside for the briefest conference. After it was over, the Scotchman, grave and quiet, busied himself in preparations for the concealment of the regicides, and for attendance on Goffe, although he had little to say to either man. He had never heard the full account of the meeting in the Maidenhead tavern. When Dick and he came together once more, later interests had pushed in between that time and them, while the subject was too sore for minute detail. But Robert knew that his friend had been hardly used. A warm partisanship betrayed itself in the slight coldness of his manner, albeit kind and ready, while Goffe remained at Squaw Ledge. Both regicides appreciated his attitude. So

soon as they were left alone General Whalley learned how matters stood between Richard Markham and his son-in-law.

"We must not trespass long upon Gordon's hospitality," they concluded.

They did not doubt Robert's good faith. It was only that they, too, were honest men, and would not prolong the strain of the situation.

Goffe's wound healed rapidly with a week of entire rest. A false wall had been hastily raised at the cabin's back. In a closet thus shut off from the one room of the hut the regicides were concealed for seven days and nights. At the end of that time Dick's tireless ministrations ceased. It was he who brought them food and drink, who waited upon the invalid. It was to him that they addressed themselves in asking further directions upon their course. They proposed to join the New Haven colony.

"Goodman Gordon will rejoice to be quit of us," Whalley remarked when Dick handed him the rude map he prepared for their guidance. "The burden of this secret hath pressed heavily upon our other host."

Richard was too truthful to accept the offered explanation.

"My dear old friend cannot be made to see," he glanced past Whalley towards Goffe, "that this has been the crowning happiness of my life. And now, sirs, if you are ready, I will conduct you to the path I named."

They were ready. After short leave-taking between themselves and Robert, they followed Dick along the ledge to the stream. He pointed to the southeast, indicating by the chart in the old man's hand the way they were to go.

"And so fare you well," said he.

Whalley wrung his fingers until Dick winced. "May you be rewarded for what you have done," he exclaimed.

"May he not suffer hurt," was William Goffe's response. He paused before he took the plunge down the steep embankment. For the last time he looked into Richard's eyes. "We are quits," said he. "We stand equal in the sight of God and man."

Dick's face was serenely bright. He could not guess the future — that he should remain undetected, unmolested for this thing he had done. Yet he gladly embraced the dangers of the purest and highest joy earth ever brought to him.

"A life for a life," he muttered hoarsely.

“Does this deed, then, wipe out the fault of my father’s youth?”

The regicide waved a parting salute.

“The atonement is complete. You have kept your word,” he said.

And so he went on his way.

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